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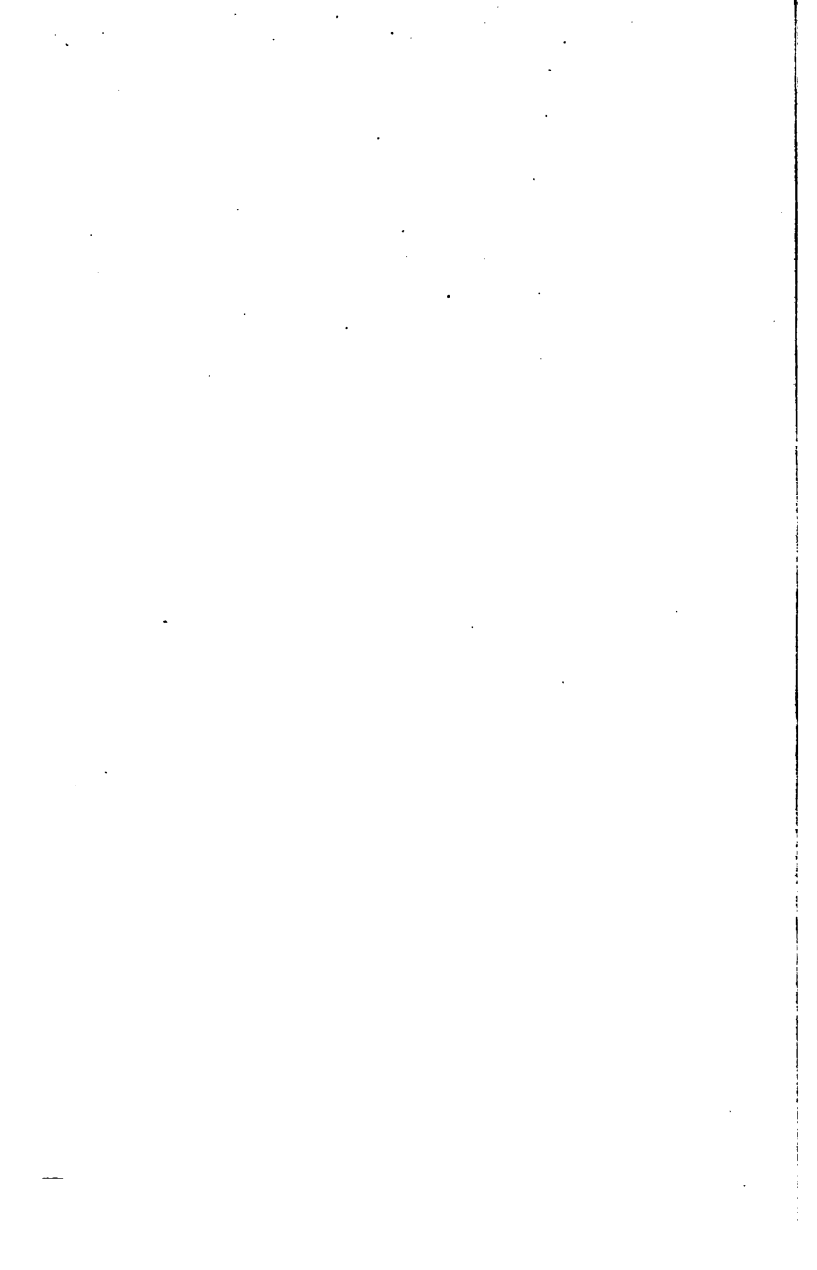
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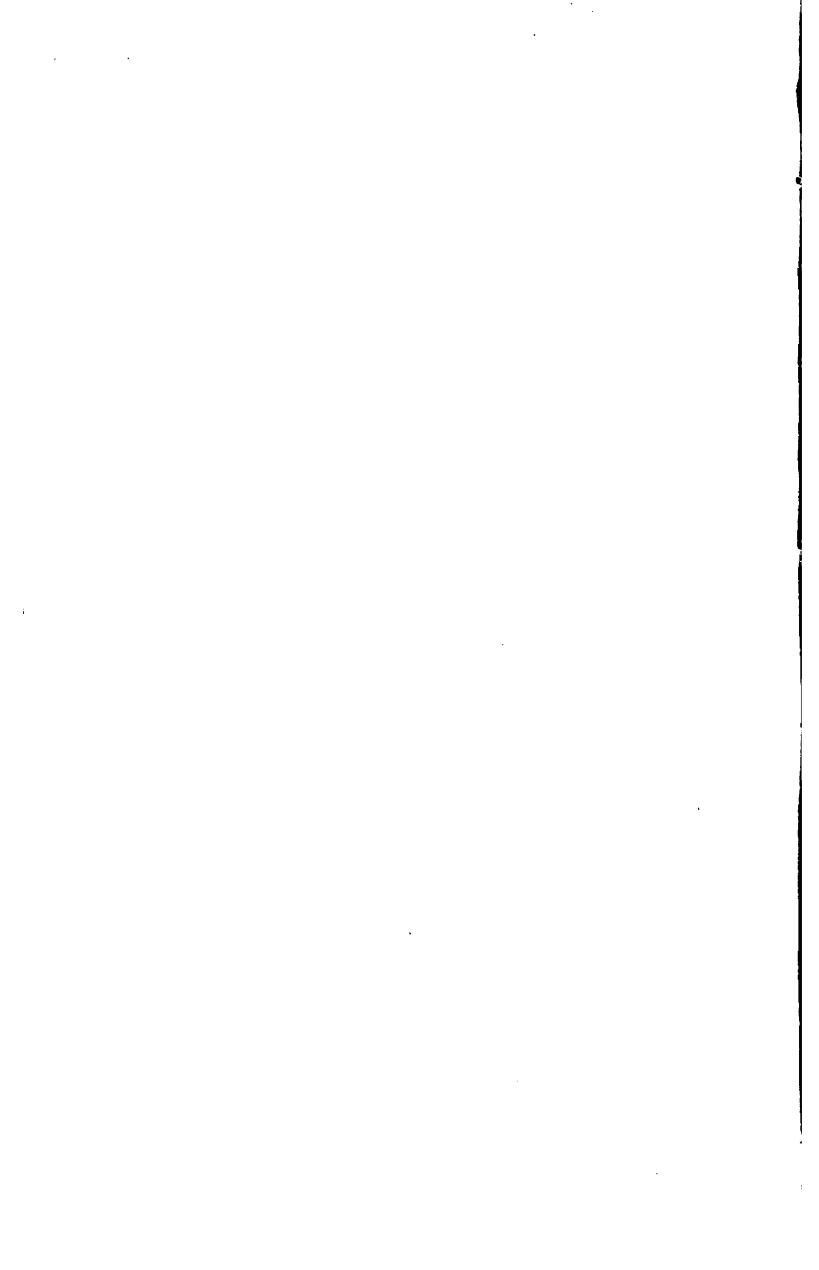
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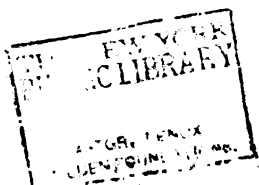
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BRIGGS











E.P. BRIGGS 1911

Fifty Years on the Road

The Autobiography of a Traveling Salesman

By

EDWARD P. BRIGGS

Kansas City, Missouri

L.C.

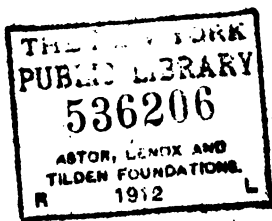
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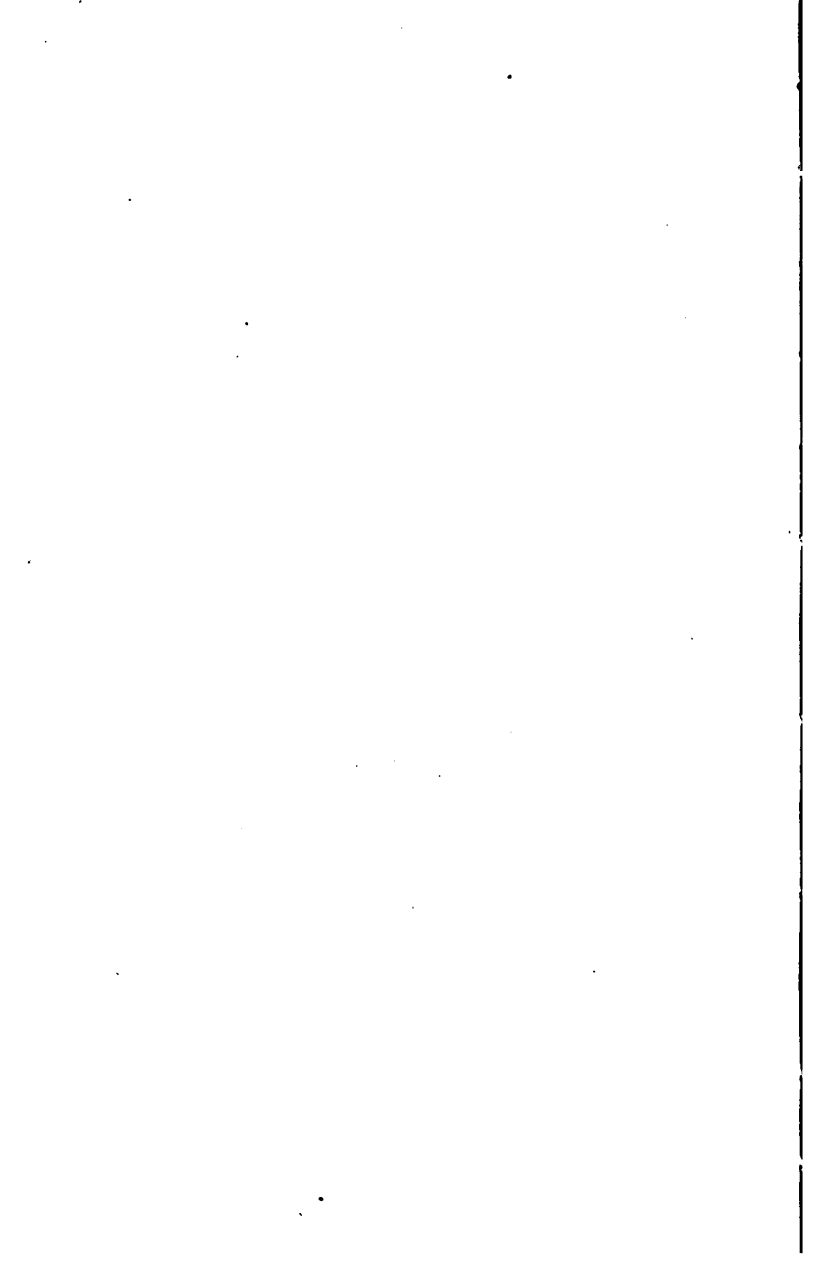
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Mar. 21,

P. Briggs



PREFACE

An autobiography is the perpetuation of a life. It preserves for another generation the story of the struggles and the triumphs of a fellow human being. The thoughts and the aspirations of the autobiographer cannot be very dissimilar to the feelings and incidents in the lives of millions, and the way in which one man has lived cannot fail to be of vivid interest to those who are just commencing to live.

To the hundreds of thousands of Americans, young and old, who are engaged in salesmanship, this record of a travelling salesman will be interesting and helpful. As a bright star has always aided man to travel in the right direction, so will this book aid those who are looking for the safest guides toward happiness and success. The ways by which some have arrived at certain epochs will surely be those by which others are going, and the experience of one serves another as warning or guidance, according to the secret bent of his nature and his dread or desire to be led to the right or turned to the left.

This is not a record of adventure or a recital of a career of brilliant achievement. It is a story of a

half-century of honest salesmanship. It is a sincere effort to transmit to other lives the truthful optimism which was the creed of a successful salesman. It is a narrative of one who ardently desired to win with honor, and who has been neither ashamed to confess his convictions nor afraid to advance his own conclusions.

THE PUBLISHER.

Kansas City, Missouri,
October, 1911.



Fifty Years on the Road

CHAPTER I.

BOYHOOD EXPERIENCES.



I WAS born in 1839, when railroads were young, when the telegraph was a novelty, when the telephone was unknown and when every traveller was viewed as a suspicious character. The state of American society has been revolutionized in my lifetime. In my boyhood we were an agricultural people, living was simple, locomotion both difficult and restricted, and the greater volume of our manufactured articles of commerce were imported from England. There were therefore but two great divisions in commerce—the wholesaling importer and the retailer. It was before the era of advertising, and the only link between the wholesaler and the retailer was the travelling drummer.

I was born twelve miles north of Troy, New York, in the town of Schaghticoke, Rensselaer County. I attended a private school until 1856, where under the tutelage of the preceptress, I obtained the rudiments

of an education. In this year my father, who was a merchant and cotton goods manufacturer, failed in business. My elder brother and myself had then to go to work. A manufacturer of cotton goods gave my brother employment in his office, while my father thought best for me to teach a country school. My estimate of my teaching ability was modest, and I was especially skeptical regarding my possession of a sufficient stock of knowledge to qualify me. It transpired, however, that I was competent, for upon going before the examining board, I received a certificate for the grade constituting the common branches. My application for a country school was acted upon favorably and I received an appointment nine miles from home at four dollars per week and board. The board was provided by the patrons, each patron boarding me two weeks. The term comprised the late Fall and Winter, the scholars consisting of the sons and daughters of farmers, most of whom were grown and some of them larger and older than myself.

When the school term was finished I realized my lack of a more complete education. I resolved, therefore, to become a student at The Burr Seminary, in Manchester, Vermont, paying my expenses from my savings. I soon discovered how little I knew in comparison to most of my fellow students. Realizing

that it required hard study to make a showing among my class-mates, I studied very hard, in some of my classes doing very well and in other classes was rated high, particularly in grammar and mathematics. At the end of the term in The Burr Seminary I returned home, and in the Fall commenced teaching a school in the country five miles from home. At the end of the Winter term I felt much better qualified for teaching than I had the year before. I again went to The Burr Seminary for a second term and studied with so much energy and application that I returned at the end of the term run down from the effects of over-study. The doctor recommending an out-door life as a remedy for my condition, I went to work on a farm and husked corn for two weeks. The farm where I husked the corn was two miles from my home, and this distance I walked every morning and night. I received one-third of all the corn I husked. I husked about thirty bushels per day, and upon selling my share I found that I had made one dollar a day during the two weeks.

When the corn husking job was completed the farmer who had employed me offered to take me to New York and act as his cashier while he sold his potatoes. I accepted his offer and accompanied him on the trip of one hundred and fifty miles to the city where I was to pass so much of my life.

While in New York City I looked around for a situation. It was more difficult for a boy then to obtain a situation than it is now. Through the assistance of a friend I obtained employment in the store of Hezekiah King, No. 86 John street, New York City, in December, 1858. When I commenced to learn the business in 1858 boys in stores were regarded somewhat as were the apprentices to mechanical trades. They seldom received over fifty dollars per year, and in some instances that sum was considered entirely too munificent, for it was the mental attitude of the merchant that it was much more trouble to teach the boy than he was worth.

Store boys were generally the sons of rich men, and as their fathers were generally anxious for them to learn the business, there was a feeling among the merchants that it was a kind condescension to have a boy around the place, and that it was a prodigal waste of time and money to receive him as a pupil and pay him for learning. Some boys thought they were above the business, and were not willing to carry packages, to sweep out the store or perform duties of similar character, considering this sort of work to be within the scope of the porter's duties.

There was one young man in our store who was of a good family. His father was a Fifth avenue preacher and was considered wealthy. This young

man received ten dollars per month. He did not do much labor, carefully selecting the lightest work, such as tying up packages of cutlery. He kept a horse and buggy and left the store every afternoon about four or five o'clock to take a ride. Each morning about eleven o'clock he would walk out and get his morning drink. A short time after I came to work in the store this young man asked for an increase in his wages, giving as a reason that the price of oats had gone up. He did not get the increase in salary, and finally left. Not long afterward we learned of his death.

Fortunately for myself, I was asked when applying for the position, for which many other boys had registered their names, if I were willing to work hard, to sweep out the store and to sleep in it, to carry the keys, etc. I gave satisfactory assurances of my determination to work hard, and it was doubtless my ambitious earnestness which impressed my questioner and secured me the position. I had saved a little money, and continued the habit of thrift, as I was strongly advised to do by the friend who recommended me for this position.

After I had been with Mr. King for some little time, I was sent to Dixon's Writing and Bookkeeping School for one term by my employer and at his expense. Upon finishing this term I was promoted to the position of

entry clerk, my duties being considerably different from those I performed in my former position.

In addition to charging sales in the day books and making out bills, I was allowed to carry the money to bank for deposit and to pay custom duties on importations through the custom house. Nearly all the purchases of the house were English or German goods, for at that time the American hardware manufacturer had not begun to produce those fine and cheap wares which have won for us our own market and which may eventually win for us the markets of the world.

During the three years I stayed in the store I was occupied with congenial work and doubtless satisfied my superiors. In the early part of 1861, the year the Civil War commenced, I was laid off for about three months. We were cut off from the South, from which we drew nearly all our business, and such was the completeness of the business depression that it seemed impossible to get a situation.

I was determined to earn something and sold newspapers on the streets and in stores. Indeed, selling newspapers was almost the only occupation open to me, and the only business which at that time was brisk. It was my desire not to remain idle and to make even a little money to pay my board and living expenses. I had saved three hundred dollars from the time I worked on the farm and during the three years in the

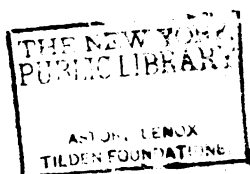
store and I was resolved to keep this sum intact. Having no one upon whom I could depend for support, the possession of this Three Hundred Dollars gave me a feeling of some security; but I dreaded to encroach upon it and would have gladly seized upon any work which promised to preserve it. In saving it I had been compelled to practice many rigid economies, living in a basement restaurant, where I paid sixpence (six and one-quarter cents) for breakfast, one shilling (twelve and one-half cents) for dinner, and sixpence for supper, or a total of twenty-five cents per day for board. The currency of this country at that time contained no five and ten cent pieces, as we now have, and the sixpence and shilling were almost universally used.

I eventually tired of my basement restaurant and moved to a large boarding house, which accommodated one hundred persons and where I paid two and one-half dollars per week. The great modern hotels have superceded the boarding house as it flourished in those days. The boarding house of that time was an index of the state of society. All classes were represented and it often happened that persons of wealth and distinction lodged at the same place and ate from the same table as clerks and apprentices. The old-fashioned boarding house was one great family, where everybody strove to learn all about the business of everybody else. It was totally unlike our twentieth

century hotels, which are simply places to eat and sleep in. The boarding house of a former generation was a place where business was transacted in the public parlor, where love affairs blossomed amid the conflicting partisanship of all observers, where gossip originated or was elaborated, and where the charges for a week's service were not more than the cost of boarding for a day are now at some of the metropolitan hotels.




E.P.BRIGGS 1861



CHAPTER II.

ON THE ROAD DURING THE CIVIL WAR.

 HE war being under way in good earnest, and our business not improving, I was sent out to sell goods as travelling salesman. My first trip began September 5, 1861, and my first efforts were in Washington, D. C. I remained in the capital ten days, calling on the trade and getting some new experiences in addition to selling six hundred dollars' worth of goods, chiefly cutlery. The reason I was sent to Washington was that my employer thought that I could possibly sell to the army sutlers. Mr. King was an old friend of Mr. John Hay, who was then secretary to President Lincoln, and Mr. King expected that this friendship might be helpful in obtaining for me permission to cross the Potomac into Virginia and open a selling campaign throughout the army, which was either encamped or actively operating in that State within easy travelling distance of Washington.

I took the letter from Mr. King to the White House and presented it to Mr. Hay. Although I was received with courtesy, I did not get the pass which I desired on that occasion, but later one was issued to me. Rather than make a failure of the trip I carefully in-

vestigated the selling possibilities of Washington, with the result of making many acquaintances and selling the six hundred dollars' worth of goods.

An incident of this first trip illustrates those economical expedients which were habitually practiced by me, and which were then imperative. When I went to the hotel I found it a \$2.50 per day house, and upon concluding that I would be there several days I sent my first order to New York and searched for a cheaper method of living so as to reduce expenses. In nearly every street there were dwellings with signs reading: "Rooms to Rent." I secured one of these rooms on a street very convenient to Pennsylvania avenue, then, as now, the principal business street. For this room I paid fifty cents per day and ate at so-called restaurants. In this way I reduced my daily expenses fifty per cent. and probably enjoyed the experience as much as if I had remained in the more expensive hotel at \$2.50 per day.

I remember vividly the first order I took in Washington. I was a little diffident in introducing myself—a diffidence which was the natural result of my youth and inexperience. I had, before starting on this first trip, asked my employer for instruction regarding the most satisfactory method of approaching a prospective customer. My employer declined to give me any advice or any instructions, remarking that there could be

no fixed rules, and that if I were guided by circumstances I would doubtless find out for myself the most successful method of introducing myself to secure a favorable hearing.

The merchant upon whom I first called was a very polite man. I had a package of samples with me, and upon asking him to look at them he complied. He seemed satisfied with the quality of my samples and with the prices, finally giving me an order for sixty dollars' worth of cutlery. This first order made me very happy and I immediately went to my hotel and sent it on to New York. I have perhaps forgotten many incidents of my long career on the road, but I have a very clear recollection of every phase of my first order. In this respect I am certainly not dissimilar to other travellers, for if there is anything which is liable to stick in their minds it is getting married, getting discharged and getting the first order.

The first order is one of the most important happenings in the life of a travelling man. How this first order colors the mind, often influences the future of the young man, and sometimes the first order sweeps away the timidity of youth and infuses into him all the courageous energy of manhood. But there are some who are constitutionally timid. They are always afraid and, without confidence either in themselves or their fellowmen, they hesitate and are lost to the road. If

n. 6365 C Headquarters Provost Marshal General,
DEFENCES SOUTH OF POTOMAC,
ALEXANDRIA Va., *August 26th 1863*

Guards and Pickets:
Co. J. 1st Brig. (and) return
Washington D.C.
Expiry *August 31/63*
By Command of Lieut. Colonel H. H. WELLS,
Gen. Defences South of Potomac.
WM. W. WINSHIP,
Lieut. & A. A. A. Gen.
Not Transferable.

OATH.

In availing myself of the benefits of this Pass I do solemnly swear that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against its enemies, whether domestic or foreign; that I will bear true faith, allegiance, and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or law of an insurrectionary legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; that I will not give aid, comfort, or assistance to its enemies; and further, that I do this with a full determination, peace and purpose, without any mental reservation or condition whatsoever; and that I will not abuse the pass or the privileges hereby granted. So help me God.

E. P. Briggs

I were to give advice to a young travelling man I would say: "Don't be afraid!" To be afraid means that you will never do your best. You will become bewildered. Your fear will distract your mind and prevent concentration. It means that misfortune will find you an easy prey. It means that you will worry and fret yourself into premature old age. It means that wrinkles will too early mar the comeliness of your face and that the bent body and whitening hair will hurry you past your youth. "Don't be afraid" is a good motto for any young man. It is undoubtedly true that fortune favors the brave. Keep serene and cheerful, so that your thoughts will flow cleanly and clearly. For your thoughts will decide whether you are to be timid or brave. If you are wrong in thought you will always be timid; but if you think the truth and are saturated with earnestness you will never be afraid. The timid are seldom happy, and they are unable to bring happiness to others—or to send orders home. Fear is but a ghost of your mind. You are afraid because you cannot see an hour ahead or to forecast to-morrow. You are as a child who is afraid of the dark. You worry because you imagine that a hundred evils lurk in ambush to overwhelm you with ruin. Shadowy shapes loom in the future—fear of debt, of poverty, of illness, of failure, of lost reputation, or a lost situation. They crowd into timid souls and fill them with panic. They

are phantoms. They are visions of the air. Conjurings of the imagination. Forget them. These fearsome images of the mind seldom tarry long with the brave. And courage is the birthright of us all. Nature intended you and me to be brave. Courage is only a habit, but a habit which will arm you to do your best to-day and prepare you to enjoy to-morrow. More than that, you will enjoy to-day because you have grasped the very best there was in the present. You can call to-day your own, because you have seized it. You have squeezed from it all its joy and possessed all its sweetness. The present hour is your own. Reach forward for its smiles; work and wrest out of it your reward. You will have laughed and lived and won to-day. You will be stronger and braver then, and you will laugh and live and win to-morrow.

Chance and luck will never use you for a plaything in the lottery of life if you are brave. The strife will have made you strong, the victory will have made you wise, and chance and luck are always kind to those who are strong and wise. You will never drift with the tide. You will always be captain of your own ship, the master of your own fortune. Young man, don't be afraid! Though your hand grow weak and your heart grow faint, wait, plan and try again. Success may dance toward you in the next hour; it may be speeding to you in the next mail, waiting for you at the

next call, or smile on you with to-morrow's sunrise. Alas, what myriads have failed because they were afraid—afraid to dare, afraid to wait, afraid to work, afraid to hope. What brilliant minds and pure lives have withered into useless decay because the heart quailed before the task or trembled before the deed. An army of warriors is associated in the human mind as the supremest type of courageous effort. They starve, they suffer, they fight, they die, because they are not afraid. But the dauntless spirit of unconquerable courage dwells a hundred-fold stronger in the places of peace. And nowhere is its lofty inspiration needed more than among travelling men. Many of these lives are as valuable as any that ever perished on the field of glory. For, generally, travelling men are industrious, and to be industrious is to be brave. The life of these workers is not flung away in passionate delirium, as is the soldier's; but is day by day and year by year passed in creating business, in making prosperity for others, while they are earning the right to life and are patiently storing up a morsel of joy for some loved one. The life of a travelling man is often a sacrifice—a noble, splendid sacrifice—noble and splendid because it is silent. Don't be afraid to work and don't be afraid to save, for those who shiftily avoid work are really afraid to face the hard, bare facts of life. The shirker looks on life like a gambler, and

uses plausible schemes to entice his subsistence from the more industrious ones. But the gambler who acquires money without industry or merit will surely lose his all to a more skilful shuffler of the cards. It is not shrewd to be cunning, nor is it sensible to be idle. The good man or woman will not be afraid to work, and the worker soon finds the way to thrift. Don't be afraid that your cross of labor or of pain will be too heavy for you to bear, for those who have no cross bear the heaviest burden of us all.

Don't be afraid to be kind to the humble. Don't be afraid to fight when you are right and to yield when you are wrong. Don't be afraid to be just, though you stand for truth while all around you mock. Don't be afraid to do your duty, though it call you to toil in the burning sun while your companions shirk in the shade. Don't be afraid to love those that love you, to be patient with those that oppose you, and to be gentle with those who do not know. Don't be afraid to be bravely silent when speech would injure another, nor to boldly speak when your voice will comfort the righteous cause. And do not despise the timid; but breathe into their faltering spirits the placid courage of your own brave heart.

Don't be afraid, and you will be proud of yourself—too proud to envy the fortunate and too proud to covet the power of the great. You will not be ashamed

of your poverty. You will not blush because you have not delved deeply into the depths of learning. You will not seek with subterfuges, and tricks to hide the simple truths either about yourself or the goods you sell. You will be proud because you have been honest. You will be content because you have been brave. You will be happy because you have done your best and everlastingly glad because you have not been afraid. The fighting spirit is absolutely imperative to the commercial traveller. Success is impossible without it and without it all the zest and enthusiasm of the work seems to drip out of the system.

In those days I made comparatively few towns, as my territory comprised the agricultural States of the South and Southwest. During the Civil War I, of course, was debarred from selling in the States which were in rebellion, but after the struggle was over I visited the storm-swept area many times.

During the continuance of the war I included Washington in my selling trips several times a year, and as my acquaintanceship grew I also grew more aggressive, with the result that business improved so that I could stay there from one to three weeks each trip. Every day and every night I sold some goods. Sometimes the sutlers, the merchants with the army, would come in from camp two or three times during my stay in town and order more goods, and to some extent this

was true with the city merchants. Very few retail dealers in hardware were able to estimate the size of the selling market or to estimate the probable demand for goods. In the early part of the war commercial conditions around Washington were in somewhat of a chaotic state and every buyer of goods was very conservative in his purchases. There was, of course, a very sound reason for this, for no one could tell how long the army would remain in the vicinity of the capital.

On one occasion a Washington merchant came to the Old National Hotel, where I was registered, after he had closed his store. He arrived about nine or ten o'clock at night and stayed in my room until one A. M., selecting goods. I have no recollection of the amount of business I did on this trip, but concluded it was satisfactory to my employers. My expenses were only about three dollars per day and my salary thirty dollars per month, so it did not take a very large volume of business to return a profit to my employers on each trip.

Soon after this Washington trip I was sent on another trip and continued on the road until I reached St. Louis, Missouri.



CHAPTER III.

IN WAR-WORN MISSOURI.



T. LOUIS was the war-capital of the west and my first trip there was satisfactory. I found, however, as the war advanced my expenses also increased until they amounted to about \$6.00 per day. The next year, in 1863, I went as far west as Leavenworth, Kansas, and St. Joseph, Missouri. At this time there was a jealousy in St. Louis against any Eastern party making any Missouri River towns and my largest customer there asked me where I was going next. I hesitated for a moment, and then replied, "To Chicago." He said: "That is all right; but if I hear of you going up the Missouri River I will quit you." This declaration prevented me from going up the Missouri that year, as I had no desire to sacrifice my St. Louis trade for an uncertainty.

In 1862, and even in 1863, when I ventured going to St. Joseph, Missouri, and Leavenworth, Kansas, I found a strong jealousy in those two towns against my going to Kansas City. One patron in Leavenworth, Kansas, asked me where I was going next. When I replied: "To Kansas City," he said with great positiveness: "If you are going down there to sell the

rebels, you can cut out my order." The existence of this prejudice prevented me from going to Kansas City that year.

In 1864 I made my first trip to Kansas City, Missouri, which was then a city of approximately five thousand people, not including the prisoners of war in the several warehouses. I had come to Kansas City by rail, but found that I would be unable to get back to St. Louis in that manner, for the Confederates had burnt many bridges and torn up much of the track of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, which then ran across the State of Missouri from Quincy, Illinois, to St. Joseph, Missouri. I was obliged, therefore, to take a boat down the river to St. Louis, and we were forced by shots across her bow to land at three different points by the Federal troops. The Federal troops boarded us and compelled every person aboard to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. Both sides of the Missouri River at that time swarmed with bushwhackers and numerous spies throughout the cities and between the armies.

At Jefferson City all of our male passengers were compelled to form a pioneer company and aid in throwing up fortifications around the town, upon which the enemy was advancing. There was some fighting, hardly more than a skirmish, and when the Confederate force was driven back it was discovered that the

main army of the enemy was marching toward Boonville, Missouri, where the Federal government had large stores and magazines. The designs of the Confederates were defeated, however, as the Northern armies received heavy reinforcements by way of St. Louis across the country.

Some of my friends were highly amused over the report that I had to go into the trenches and wield pick and shovel at hard labor. This report must have been circulated by the enemy, for the truth was that I remained on the boat, according to orders, and prepared to actively assist in the hospital duties if the emergency should require. When the forces of the enemy were routed the passengers who had been temporarily forced into the service "skedaddled" and returned to the boat. The captain of the boat pulled anchor as soon as he found that he again had his passengers, and started again toward St. Louis. Here we were again forced to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. According to my memory we were about ten days in reaching St. Louis, and during this time I had no communication either with my employer or my father's family. Although this war experience was common to most of those who travelled in close proximity to the theatre of the conflict, it gives but a very slight illumination of the great events which transpired in Missouri during my trips in that State.

The economic and social conditions of Missouri at the outbreak of the war and during the war were about what society was in the Eastern States during the American Revolution. The slaveholders of Missouri, though not numerous, constituted her political and social aristocracy. They were large landholders, mainly settled in the fertile countries along the banks of the Missouri River, through the very heart of the State. These slaveholders exerted a potent control over the poorer, less intelligent, and less influential pioneers, who thinly overspread the rural counties north and south of them. The mercantile aristocracy of St. Louis before the war was predominantly devoted to the supposed interest of the slaveholders and docile to their commands. Yet St. Louis had a very large proportion of the population which was hostile to slavery and secession, and it was this class of citizens both in St. Louis and in Kansas City, which eventually saved Missouri to the Union. Kansas, however, had a population which had been educated by the rough experience of previous years into deadly hostility to the slave power, and this Kansas population resisted strenuously and fiercely every attempt to drive the State into the Confederacy.

After the war was over I was sent down the Mississippi River to Vicksburg, Natchez, and to New Orleans. I also travelled over the territory along the


Atlantic Coast, selling in Richmond, Petersburg, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah and other important towns in the Southern Atlantic States. Previous to the war most of the trade of our firm had been with the South and we naturally desired to get all the trade in this territory with which we could profitably deal. The country, of course, was poor, and it was necessary to extend very long credits to almost every buyer.

During the progress of the war the firm name was changed to H. and J. W. King. For some time the younger Mr. King travelled to such points as I did not make. Finally, however, he retired from the road and his place was taken by other young men who had been raised with the house. One of these young men was my friend, Francis G. Witte, of the hardware company which now bears his name in New York City.

Head Quarters Post
Jefferson City Mo Oct 4th 1864
Tickets will pass E. P. Briggs through
& in the city
By order Brig Genl E. P. Brown
W. L. Ferguson
Capt Comd Post

CHAPTER IV.

OLD-TIME PRICES AND BUSINESS METHODS.

URING the Civil War goods continually advanced in price. This advance had an odd effect on the hardware business, as it seemed that circumstances were so peculiar that the wholesalers declared they made no money on a rising market. I well remember that when I asked for a raise in salary from forty-five dollars per month, I was told that I had made no money for the house, as the firm could not buy back the goods for the prices at which I had sold them. My salary had originally been thirty dollars per month, but with each advance I felt that my services had become correspondingly valuable. The firm, however, soon realized that their logic was not applicable to me, and shortly afterwards raised my salary about fifty per cent. and still later about fifty per cent. more. Five years after the close of the war I was voluntarily advanced to a salary which was satisfactory to each of us.

During the entire twenty-one years that I was with this firm I never asked for but one advance. In 1868 I was cut two hundred and fifty dollars per annum, but in the next year my former salary was restored.

This year was a bad year and as the reason given for the cut in salary was unsatisfactory profits, I acquiesced without the least resentment.

There is a startling difference in the prices of hardware during the war period and the prices prevailing at present. Most of the hardware and cutlery was of English manufacture, although there was some of German origin. Two items especially are worthy of a comparison—saws and jack-knives. The best English hand-saws sold up to \$75.00 per dozen. Saws of American manufacture, every bit as good as the English, are now sold from \$15.00 to \$18.00 per dozen. Good English jack-knives then sold for from \$8.00 to \$12.00 per dozen. American jack-knives, equal in every way to those formerly imported, are now sold for from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per dozen.

The hardware business did not feel the destroying influence of the war as seriously as many other businesses. From 1861 to 1865 it was not very difficult to sell hardware. The fact that prices were very high and on a gold basis worked some hardship and kept down the volume of business. The premium on gold reached as high as two hundred and fifty per cent., and this premium had to be added to the prices of the goods. After the war the premium fell gradually and the prices of goods began to correspondingly decline.

The mode of selling in these early days was simple

and direct. There were comparatively few salesmen on the road and they only stopped in the cities and large towns. The great majority of the salesmen were from the eastern cities, where were the head offices and warehouses of the importers and manufacturers. Apparently the salesman had only to call upon the merchant and announce that he was willing to sell him and show him his samples to receive an order. There was, however, just enough competition in some places to make it interesting for the salesman and convince him that his usefulness extended further than to show samples and to send home the orders. But all were glad to see you, and most of the retailers would ask for an appointment, so that in one day I sold fifteen hundred dollars' worth of English hardware and cutlery in a town fifteen hundred miles from New York City. All this hardware was sold in a retail way and much of it to persons who were going to use it themselves. All customers came to the hotel to see and examine the samples and the trunks of the salesmen were carried up to the rooms by strong porters, often two, three or four stories, for this was in the days before elevators.

Most of the goods were priced in the English fashion—in pounds, shillings and pence. They were bought in that way and it was customary to add the duty, the expense of selling and profit in the same monetary

units. The equivalent in our currency was figured out also and the customer was able to compare the various stages of the selling price as these stages advanced from the original American wholesaler and importer to the consumer. For example, some pocket cutlery was sold at from \$6.50 to \$8.00 to the pound sterling. Other pocket cutlery was sold as high as \$10.00, or at a ratio of from forty to fifty cents to an English shilling. This was the addition of the amount of duty and other expenses incident to handling and to importation. Calculating an English shilling at approximately twenty-five cents, the duty, expense and profit transformed the original English shilling into forty or fifty cents of our money in cases such as the last one noted.

In those days goods were almost universally sold on long credit. This was the case particularly in the South, where it was customary to take in payment notes running from four to eight months. The notes were generally timed so as to run until their crops were ready for the market. The chief money crop was then cotton and the customer was sometimes carried from one year to the next. The notes were discounted, and in cases when they were not paid when due we had to send our check to take up the note.

We had one slow customer in 1871 who would not give his notes. To do business with him our firm carried him to a time until the head of our house called

my attention to his account. I wrote him asking him for my sake to send in at least some money on account. He then sent fifty dollars, and after making another trip to St. Louis, I received the balance of the money. I considered myself lucky in this instance, as shortly afterward he was involved in a law suit which ruined him. The incident which caused this law suit is odd enough to relate. His clerk was loading a revolver for a customer in the store while the employer was at dinner. It was against the law to load a revolver in a hardware store at that time, and this violation of the law was exposed by the revolver going off and the bullet breaking a boy's leg on the opposite side of the street. The father of the boy sued for damages and got judgment for a large amount. After an obstinate and expensive contest in the courts, the costs and judgment amounted to about eight thousand dollars. The effort to pay this sum so embarrassed our customer that he soon afterward failed.

The orthography and phraseology of his first letter to me may be entertaining:

St. Louis, June 26, 1871.

Mr. E. P. Briggs.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I am certain as much sorrow as you that things will stay some longer as before, but, my Friend, I never have seen such times in business

as it has bin here sins last Fall, and I have had by all this one drouble after another.

When sickness was over in my familie then I have been pretty near six weeks sick and no business had been done hardly at all in this time. I have plenty goods in store but no selling at present. You must not git uneasy my Friend—neither the Firm. I have to wait just as well as you, but things will be all wright my Friend, hard times came unexpected.

Please tell my Friends, Messrs. Kings, that I will make it up with them again in better times and just as soon as business will increase a little I will send some money as I all ways have done.

Yours very truly,

FRIEND.

P. S.—How is your familie. Is the Baby well also, my best respect and kiss the baby for me.—F.

Head-Quarters 1st Military District,

ENROLLED MISSOURI MILITIA,

St. Louis, October 17th, 1864.

The Guard with pass E. P. Briggs

for ten days BEING A NON-RESIDENT.

By order of Brig. Gen. H. C. PIKE.

Fred. M. Schaefer
Lieut. & ENROLLING OFFICER.


OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

In availing myself of the benefits of this Pass, I do solemnly affirm that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, without exception; that I will bear true faith, allegiance, and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or law of any State convention or legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; that I will not give aid, comfort, or information to its enemies; and further, that I do this with a full determination, pledge, and purpose, without any mental reservation or evasion whatsoever; and further, that I have always been true and loyal to the Government of the United States; So help me God.

E. P. Briggs

CHAPTER V.

ROAD INCIDENTS IN THE SOUTH AND WEST.

N those days it took about ten hours to go from New York City to Washington, D. C. I always made this trip at night, as there would then be more economy in time. It was before the days of the Pullman sleeping car; but bunks were made up on the order of ship travel, for which the charge was one dollar. In ordinary steam travel we made only from twenty to twenty-five miles to the hour. On the rivers in steamboats the progress was very slow, as the boat stopped at all the landings and often would push the bow against the bank to let on or off a single passenger.

During this early period I made all the leading towns on the Mississippi River from St. Paul to Memphis. After the war I went down the river as far as New Orleans. I also made some stage trips in Missouri, Colorado and Iowa. In Missouri one of these trips by stage was of thirty-five miles, one of seventy-five miles in Iowa and short stage trips in Colorado from Denver to towns in the vicinity.

My longest stage trip, the one in Iowa, of seventy-five miles, was made in the old-fashioned swinging

coach and four horses. These horses were changed during the trip six times.

Transportation was then more expensive than now. Hotel charges were, however, very much less than at present. The tariff in a fairly good hotel ranged from one dollar per day up to one dollar and fifty cents and two dollars in the largest cities. Washington City, soon after the opening of the war, raised the price per day to two dollars and fifty cents for the best hotel, and as the war went on the price gradually advanced to four dollars and fifty cents per day. Washington was not accurately typical of the gradual advance throughout the whole country, as the advance in other cities was much slower than there. The influx of government functionaries, the numbers of army officers and the sudden increase in the population of the capital of the nation had an almost immediate effect on the hotel rates. It was, of course, simply the operation of the laws of supply and demand.

The cheapest hotel bill that I have ever paid was at a small town in Illinois, where the landlord met me at the depot. I gave him my baggage check for a two-hundred-pound sample trunk, which he transported to a hotel upon a wheelbarrow. Then I wanted a sample room to display my cutlery samples. As the landlord had no sample room, he put my trunk in his parlor. He removed the books from the centre table in the

parlor and upon this table I spread out my samples. I then went out to get a customer and upon bringing him back to the parlor I sold him fifty dollars' worth of goods. I could do no more business in that place and was ready to go on to the next town. After having a good dinner and having my trunk wheeled back to the depot, I asked for my bill. This bill was fifty cents for dinner, transportation of trunk and a sample room! But I made a little money for the firm at that, as the profits on hardware at that time were about thirty-three and one-third per cent. This bill was rendered to me in the early sixties. Alas for the good old times!

I have previously referred to the apparent willingness of the parties on whom I called to be interviewed. There were occasional exceptions to this rule and sometimes I would meet a rebuff, with now and then discourtesy and impertinence. I seldom resented the hostile reception of a prospective customer, as I felt that it was not only puerile, but was very poor business policy. I never formed the bad habit of "talking back" impertinently, simply to enjoy the satisfaction of getting even.

One case in particular I remember with some distinctness. Upon my first call upon a merchant in Illinois, after I had presented my card, he said: "I don't want any of your damned goods." I replied quickly: "You had better go a little slow and find out first

whether I would sell you," after which remark I walked slowly out of his store. Walking around the town I inquired about him, with the result that I discovered that he was good financially, but very peculiar. I concluded, therefore, to call upon him again later in the day. When I again arrived at his store toward the close of the day, he was about closing up his store and was putting on his coat to go home. I said: "You are going home? I have inquired and know all about you. You will pass by my hotel on your way to your home and I want you to drop in a moment and look at my samples." He complied with my invitation and bought a good bill of cutlery.

In another case where I had been somewhat similarly treated, I asked a competitor what kind of a man this party was. My competitor answered my query by relating an incident of his father's life, saying that his father would never say anything against any man; but when asked concerning the character and disposition of a certain party, he replied: "He had very peculiar ways—but damn such ways!" And this was all the answer my competitor would give me to my question. There was, however, sufficient eloquent information in this kind of an answer for all my purposes.

In late years I occasionally run across a merchant who refuses to practice even the rudiments of courtesy, or in the language of the fraternity, he is "chilly." I

have always taken such a reception good-naturedly and have never resented it by "sassing" back. For example, when I walked into the private office of a certain merchant with the remark: "I see no sign reading 'No Admittance,'" he tartly replied: "When I want you in here I will invite you!"

The average salesman would have answered: "Go to h—!" But I laughed it off and carefully planned to approach him successfully on the next trip. I can truthfully say that when I had determined to interview a merchant, I always succeeded eventually in getting "next." In cases like this one, if I had made any impertinent reply, such as the one ready to the tongue of the ordinary man, I would have gotten the prospective customer prejudiced against me from the start, or in the road term "killed him."

We have all heard about Yankee thrift, but any travelling man who has sold to the storekeepers in the South will doubt the superiority of the Yankee brand of thrift. Many of the New England merchants would do well to go down South, especially away from the big cities, and take a few lessons in thrift. No one who has never sold goods to Southern storekeepers will ever find out exactly what close buying is until he covers that territory. Every storekeeper had to look over his shelves (at least it was that way in the old days) and see how soon he would run out of an article,

before he would make any order at all. Then he had to make a careful estimate of the quantity he could sell in a given time, before he would decide on the size of the order, and often you would run across a customer who insisted that you put in black and white your agreement to make a discount in case of payment within thirty days. There is no careless taking of risks and no wild-eyed slap-dashness about any of the Southern storekeepers in the days after the war. If this way of doing business becomes a characteristic of the Southern merchants of the next generation, they are going to get ahead where there is no deficiency in the productive backing they receive from the country around them. Yet I am glad to see a merchant take pains to know what he is about! To be sure, that kind of prudence can easily melt off into timidity on one side or harden into stinginess on the other. But that is the way with all our virtues. There is no limit to the possibilities of perversion presented in human nature; and that is what makes it such a grand thing for a fellow to maintain a decent character. Each susceptibility and each impulse of which a man is capable, might easily become the avenue of a rot which would prove morally ruinous to him.

In these early days there was much time wasted by some salesmen in one way or another. Of course there was a type of travelling salesmen prevalent during

these times who frittered much valuable time away in card-playing, in pool, in billiard and in other ways. But as a general thing there has been a vast improvement in the class of men travelling compared to the class of forty or fifty years ago. It is, in fact, more difficult to sell goods at present than it was in the preceding generation, and nowadays a dissipated or a lazy man will soon find himself out of a job.

A young man who starts out to-day, with fair ability, a good house back of him, and who attends strictly to business, is pretty certain to make a success. Those salesmen who have not sufficient will to guide their lives with an earnest purpose are liable to fall into reckless habits and then they soon fall by the wayside—"down and out." Occasionally you will come across a salesman who "throws dirt," so to speak, at his competitor. Such methods are not in good taste, they violate the sense of fair play and alienate even those prospective customers who are disposed to be friendly. The old saying is true: "That it is better to have the good will than the ill will of a dog," and it is true in business practice.

Personality is a great asset in the success of a travelling salesman. A good manner and gentlemanly courage will cover many deficiencies; but it is difficult to have a winning personality unless you are a man of real character, and your character inspires the pros-

pective buyer with confidence in your statements and a sense of pleasure in according you his time.

My long and varied experience has convinced me of the immense value of personality. I always make it a point to form acquaintanceships with every employee in my customer's store. It is a very serious error to ignore every one but the proprietor or the buyer. I have found that this practice of sociability pays in the end. There are many kinds of travelling salesmen and some kinds might find it difficult or impossible to unbend to porters and clerks, but it will do them no harm to be courteous to every one about the store where they are selling or where they hope to sell. Some salesmen are naturally reserved and some others are naturally arrogant. There are very many who are fortunate enough to be endowed naturally with a social and happy temperament. This social class, if they are industrious and sober, invariably make the best salesmen.

It never pays to seem discouraged, to get "blue" or allow it to become apparent that trade is dull in your line. Always keep a "stiff upper lip," force the hidden, inherent bravery in your nature to come out and exercise itself, and go right along day after day and do your best.

CHAPTER VI.

BAD HABITS HURT GOOD SALESMANSHIP.



IN early days I met a young traveller to whom I took a liking and made an appointment with him to meet me at a certain hour in the hotel at night, and enjoy the evening in a social visit. He did not keep the appointment and I did not learn the reason until the following day. Upon our meeting he told me in great distress of mind, that he had got in company with a swift crowd of travelling men, who induced him to join them in a game of poker. He had received that day one hundred dollars for travelling expenses, and before the game closed he had lost every dollar of this money to the swift crowd. I never met this young man afterwards; but I hope that he was taught a lesson which he did not forget and which was of some benefit to his future.

It was customary during the generation of war times and for at least two decades after the close of the war, to "set 'em up" to your customer, either before or after you had sold him an order. The custom was so general that in some places it was a necessary preliminary in order to get acquainted with a new party upon whom you called.

In the South, particularly after the war period, I experienced the inconveniences of this custom. Gradually, however, the custom fell into disuse, until it became a very rare thing for it to seem necessary, or for a prospective customer to intimate that an invitation to drink would be appreciated. In one case I called upon a German storekeeper several times unsuccessfully. Finally, upon remarking to the landlord of the hotel in that town that I could not sell anything to this German, the landlord said that I ought to sell him and went with me to the store of the German and introduced me. The landlord asked the German why he did not buy anything from me. Referring to me, the storekeeper said that "he never 'set 'em up.'" I instantly replied that "I never will if it is necessary to do so to sell you; but after you have bought goods from me it might make a difference." This was in Kansas and after the prohibition bill was passed. The enforcement of this prohibition bill was very lax at that time, as every travelling salesman was then aware.

It is a great asset to a young travelling man to be able to say: "No" when he is confronted with temptation. It requires some natural strength of character and as he grows older he will find that his judgment is being ripened and that his character is gaining in strength because of his determination to live by the observance of right rules of conduct.

During the war period, and for some years afterwards, there were license laws against the commercial travellers, as we were then called. These license laws were enforced with particular pertinacity in the Southern cities. If caught selling or offering to sell either by sample or otherwise, the travelling salesman was subject to arrest and a fine. He was then compelled to take out a license for six months or a year. The cost of the license ranged from fifty dollars to a hundred dollars per annum.

I was arrested once in Memphis, Tennessee, on suspicion of offering to sell. I was taken to the police station and compelled to deposit a cash bond of fifty dollars for my appearance for trial the next morning. When the charge was made by the officer who made the arrest, I pleaded: "Not guilty." Upon the failure of the prosecution to prove me guilty I was given back my fifty dollars, which I had deposited to insure my appearance. While I was not guilty in this specific instance, for I had sold no goods in the store where I had been arrested, I had nevertheless, sold to another party the previous day and had drawn through them one hundred dollars on my New York house for travelling expenses. This possession of one hundred dollars was a fortunate fact for me, for it enabled me to deposit a cash bond and escape passing a night in jail.

In Washington, D. C., I paid fifty dollars for a li-

cense for one year, and in St. Louis I paid one hundred and fifty dollars for the legal right to sell there for six months. Charleston, S. C.; Savannah, Ga., and Baltimore, Md., also had these laws. In these three towns I never took out any license and always escaped arrest. At a later period Chicago passed an ordinance requiring travelling salesmen to take out a license, but as after 1870 she commenced sending out salesmen on the road herself, it was found good civic policy to remove all restrictions to trade. St. Louis followed the good example of Chicago and also repealed the license laws in force in that city, for St. Louis had also at that time begun sending out salesmen.

Baltimore held fast to the enforcement of the license law until a test case was carried to the Supreme Court. The salesman who was arrested in this test case gave bond, and when the case reached the Supreme Court it was thrown out as unconstitutional. This ended all restrictions finally on the travelling salesman selling by sample or otherwise. It was simply the application of a business law that the cost of the license should be added to the selling price of goods sold to merchants in the town where the license was paid. In reality, therefore, the merchants of such towns paid the license, and it was probably the realiza-

tion of this fact which operated in some places against a stringent enforcement of this unjust tax.

The name generally used in referring to us during these years was "commercial travellers." At a later period we were often referred to as "travelling men." In many sections the name used to characterize us as a class was "drummers." I remember a somewhat amusing incident in Mississippi in connection with this name. A young lady, whose father was the proprietor of the hotel where I was staying, asked me if I knew a "bummer" by a certain name in New York City. She innocently supposed that as I came from New York City I would know, of course, all the travelling men, or "bummers," as she called them. I saw immediately that she had not the faintest idea of the meaning of the word "bummer," supposing that it was the only word to define us as a class. When I replied to her: "No, I don't know any 'bummers.' Do you know what a 'bummer' is?" "Yes," she said, "it is one of those travelling men, ain't it?" I explained with some little emphasis: "No; a 'bummer' is a drunken sot or loafer." She was somewhat ashamed of her error, and apologized for the wrong impression which the misuse of the disreputable term would give concerning us.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE FIRM OF KING, BRIGGS & CO.



IN 1873 Mr. Francis T. Witte and myself were taken into the firm, which was changed to King, Briggs & Co. The Francis T. Witte Hardware Company, of New York City, is the successor of this firm. In 1868 the old house had three salesmen on the road, Mr. Witte, myself and another man. In that year the other man died and both of the Messrs. King have now been dead for some years. Unfortunately for the new firm of King, Briggs & Co., the panic of 1873 struck us before we got fairly started. This panic lasted for six years, during which time there was a terrible shrinkage in the values of merchandise. This shrinkage in values extended to other items and caused many failures, some of the seemingly strongest houses going down to irretrievable ruin.

My entire capital was exhausted during this time, and I was in debt to the firm to the extent of fifteen hundred dollars. This debt was afterwards cancelled, but during these six years I had actually lived on my capital, as there was not only no profit in the hard-

ware business during those six years, but an actual loss.

In the latter part of 1879 prices commenced to slowly advance and business improved somewhat. During the latter part of this year nails went to six dollars per keg, and in every item of the business there was a gradual rise until 1893, when we were struck by another panic. The years 1894, 1895 and 1896 were very hard years in trade, the latter year being the very hardest in all my experience. In 1897 business improved somewhat and up to 1900 there was an annual improvement. The increase in trade and the better margin of profit have been easily evident in all the years since 1900, except, possibly, in 1908 there was a sagging and slight falling off in business.

When I first started on the road the number of travelling salesmen, I think it safe to say, did not exceed one thousand in all the United States. Nearly all of this total were from the eastern cities, where were then located the wholesalers, importers and a few manufacturers. At present the estimate of the number of travelling men in the United States is six hundred thousand! Nearly all these are from America, but there are some thousands from foreign countries. This number embraces jobber's salesmen in all the States and all salesmen who use the railroad in reaching their customers or in keeping in touch with their market.

When comparing these figures with other trade figures it is very evident that competition has greatly increased in keenness, and that the profits have decreased. Whereas fifty years ago there were no jobbing houses outside of a few of the very largest Eastern cities, nowadays every town of ten thousand inhabitants have jobbing houses in one or more lines.

In both the old house of King and in the firm of King, Briggs & Co., and in the Supplee Hardware Company, there were men of excellent ability at the head of affairs. The confidence we mutually had in each other was a great asset. I have always endeavored to do business on right principles and to so act always that confidence would be reposed in me both by my employers and by my customers. It is a pleasant fact that my customers always had confidence in me after they had done business with me long enough to test my statements. This element of confidence has been a very important factor in my success. I have met some merchants who did not have this confidence in all the salesmen who called on them; but I was always careful in making statements, always kept my promises and was invariably loyally supported by my employers.

After twenty-one years with Hezekiah King, J. W. King, and King, Briggs & Co., I associated myself with Lloyd, Supplee & Walton. My connection with the

first three firms comprised the years from 1858 to 1879. Lloyd, Supplee & Walton were succeeded by the Lloyd & Supplee Hardware Company and the business was conducted under this name until 1889, when in July of that year Mr. W. J. Lloyd retired from business and the Supplee Hardware Company was formed.

Mr. William W. Supplee has been president of the Supplee Hardware Company since its organization, and the high standard of business methods of this house have been at all times an incentive to effort and an encouragement to every one connected with this house.

I left my original firm because the firm ceased to exist when the senior partner and I retired from it. I remember very clearly all the circumstances connected with my application for employment with my present firm. They said to me: "If you come with us we want you to stay, as we do not want to educate a salesman to our way of doing business and then have him leave." They took my services and I took their advice, for I am still with them.

If there is anything in staying qualities it is evident that I possess the virtue of sticking. I practice it so faithfully and persistently because I believe in it firmly.

Hard work, honesty, patience and enthusiasm are necessary attributes to success. Enthusiasm is particularly significant, because it is an evidence that you are

certain that your firm is superior to your competitors; and this enthusiasm will communicate itself to your customer.

In this connection it is appropriate to refer to the Supplee Hardware Company's Pennsylvania line of lawn mowers, which I commenced to sell soon after they were made. I believed in the superiority of these mowers. I felt certain that our competitors had no mower comparable to them in value. By continually pushing these mowers and enthusiastically exhibiting their superior qualities I made a wonderful success with them. The territory in which I worked was mostly new territory as far as the education of the people in caring for lawns was concerned, yet each year my efforts along the line of enthusiastic salesmanship resulted in an increase in the percentage of sales.

On one occasion I succeeded to the territory of a salesman who had died. I was just a little embarrassed when his customers commenced to tell me what a fine salesman he was. My embarrassment was caused by my interrogative reflections whether these customers would be able truthfully to say the same thing of me. I was anxious to know what constituted a fine salesman, and therefore asked one of these customers what in his opinion constituted a good salesman. I had much longer experience than this deceased salesman and could not help wondering what were the qualities

of salesmanship they admired. The customer of whom I inquired said that my predecessor in that territory was honest and very conscientious, did not misrepresent the goods and never tried to force goods on him that he did not want or for which he could not find a profitable sale.

This definition of a good salesman coincided with my own principles so thoroughly that I congratulated myself upon being placed in a territory where these good qualities were appreciated. I had always believed in these principles from business policy. My experience had taught me that if the salesman insisted in forcing unsaleable goods on a customer under protest, that the next time the store was visited by the salesman and the goods were all on hand, he could not fail to feel resentful toward the salesman. Unsaleable goods are "sore eyes" to the purchaser and they are a prolific source of unsuccessful salesmen. Confidence in the salesman is half the battle.

The life on the road is not altogether a happy one—in the opinion of many. The necessity of going when the train goes, at two, three or four o'clock in the morning, or nine or twelve o'clock at night, arriving at a destination at hours when all the inhabitants are asleep and all conveniences are not available. And the memory of the hotels of early days is far from pleasant, with their badly ventilated rooms, either too cold,

or damp or too hot, with the necessity occasionally of sleeping in the same bed as a stranger. These memories are particularly of the hotels in my early days on the road, for there has undoubtedly been an immense change for the better in hotel accommodations and service.

Many times I have bought crackers and cheese and deviled ham and made a meal from it rather than take the hotel dinner. Hash has always been a very common dish and a mystery which has repelled many generations of hungry diners. I am not constituted on the same lines as a visitor in Paris who, when in a cafe, ordered hash and explained the order by saying that he then knew what he was getting.

The discomforts of some of the beds and rooms were such as to impress both body and mind for a long period after the experience. I remember with particular vividness one night in a Missouri hotel. It was a cold night and there were not sufficient covers. When I awoke in the morning (if I slept at all) there was a scattering of snow on my bed. There was a pane of glass out of the window which was partly stuffed up with cloth. Through this hole had blown quite a large quantity of snow.

In one case of which I knew, a salesman left a call for four o'clock in the morning. When that hour came it was raining very hard and he called out to the land-

lord that "he believed that he would not go in that storm." "Oh, yes you will go," said the landlord, with a loud angry shout. "I have been sitting up all night to call you and now you *will* go." And so the poor salesman was forced out in the storm against his will.

It is quite frequent in the early morning train calls there are one or more salesmen that conclude that they will not go on that train. Others sleep on and afterward claim that they never heard the call, possibly cursing the landlord in the belief that he had neglected them.

It was not my intention to spend an ordinary lifetime on the road. In fact, after I married, in 1868, I really thought that I would do as little road traveling as possible. I hoped to eventually quit the road entirely. I thought again in 1873 that the time had come, and told my wife with great satisfaction that I could now stay home. It was in this year that I was made a member of the firm with which I was raised. I made a hard and conscientious attempt to get away from the road on that occasion and put another salesman in my place. The new man for some cause or another did not make good and seemed unable to hold the greater part of my trade. It seemed easily possible I could find a better salesman that could succeed me in my territory and so increase the business as to give satisfaction to the firm. It transpired that a

new man could not do as well as I had done, for some time at least. In the case to which I have referred I was, much against my intentions and inclinations, obliged to take to the road again. I do not refer to these facts in any egotistical spirit, but plainly and simply state the facts as they happened in my own case.

Continual and persistent changes of road salesmen is bad policy for any house. The new faces and new methods break the confidential connection between the house and the customer and are always detrimental to the business. It is hard for the new salesman and many a good man falls down when he invades strange territory. I heartily wish every traveller the most abundant success, and if I have said anything helpful to him I am glad of it. Whenever I meet a travelling man, it is always a pleasure to aid him with my advice, if he wishes it.

There have been many changes in the methods of selling hardware and in the conditions of the trade in the last fifty years. The kind of goods sold has also undergone a great transformation during the same period. Many items of hardware have gone into other lines of business or drifted into other channels, into department and racket stores.

These changes have forced the straight hardware stores to add new lines which did not originally belong to the hardware trade. In my earlier days there were

several branches of hardware stores, each paying exclusive attention to its particular line. The term "hardware" then meant shelf goods chiefly. Tinware and metals, saddlery, stoves and wooden ware, were in separate stores, being distinct and different branches of business. In these days many of the large houses include all of the above lines, and some of them include harness, beds and some lines formerly belonging to the jewelry trade.

During my experience of fifty years there has been changes in goods, patterns, etc. Some goods have gone out of use and in these latter days there is a great difference in profits compared to former times.

From 1879 to about 1900 I sold in all the leading towns in Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and for the past ten years I have sold in the principal towns in Oklahoma. This kind of territory gave me my experience in a new country. The competition in this new territory, however, has been just as keen as it is in the older Eastern or Western States. I am at this time covering the trade in all the five States mentioned.

There are, of course, some smooth salesmen in the hardware business, and also some tricky travellers. In some instances I was able to identify these unreliable folks through the complaints of my customers.

For example, there is the type of tricky salesman who says to the customer: "I will meet the other sales-

man's price," meaning the salesman who previously sold this customer. To be sure the tricky salesman did meet the price, but with a cheaper line of goods, with the bitter declaration from the customer that "he will never get me again."

"Conditions are different now between the manufacturer and jobbers than they were formerly," said a manufacturer's salesman to me when I found him selling to the smallest kind of retailer in my presence. This salesman was aware that my house was a very large jobbing house, and was also a manufacturer and a manufacturer's agent. He knew that we were selling his line of goods. This state of things didn't exist to any great extent during the earlier days of the commercial traveller.

I cannot say too much in praise of my present employers. In fact all connected with the house of the Supplee Hardware Company are not only honorable men, but are efficient business men. As my former employers said in a letter describing the state of feeling existing mutually between us: "After twenty-one years of business relations we can say that we have lived in harmony all during this time," so I can also truthfully testify regarding my present employers during the thirty-two years that I have been with them.

It is our common human nature for us all to occasionally get in too much of a hurry. Sometimes we

talk too much. Sometimes we talk too little. Some folks seem to be unnecessarily slow to wait on you, and it requires the exercise of considerable patience to preserve the good-will and business of such people.

I have recently come across cases where salesmen have called upon customers in a great rush, requesting to be attended to at once, because they had to make a certain train. In these cases the buyer very naturally told the salesman that he wouldn't need anything. In reality if the salesmen who do this were not in so much of a hurry they would stand much more chance of getting some business. As a general rule nothing can be more fatal than this practice, because the very fact that the salesman assumes that his time is of more value than the customer's time is made so evident that it cannot fail to offend the customer.

It has invariably been my own practice to scrupulously consider the susceptibilities of my prospective customers. Whenever I have been asked at what time I wished to leave town, I have generally replied: "Whenever I get through my business." This consideration for the buyer is not only the use of a proper courtesy, but it gives the storekeeper time to reflect upon his course regarding you. In very many instances when I had plainly indicated to the customer that his time was of more importance than mine, the result has been that I received some kind of an order,

whereas had I shown him that I was in a hurry I would probably not have received the order.

524 Headquarters Department of Washington,

Washington, Sept- 5th 1864

PASS Mr E. P. Briggs over all Bridges and Ferries

to Fort Sumner's Village and Alexandria Va and return for Seven days

Reason: Business

By command of MAJOR GENERAL AUGUR:

John T. Gibbon

Lieut. Col., Chief of 2d Dept. of Washington.

NOTE Teams to be examined by Pickets for contraband goods.

NOTE—This Pass will be taken up by the Guard, at its expiration, and returned to Headquarters, Department of Washington.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOLDING TRADE AND GETTING ORDERS.



T gives me pleasure to reflect that I am selling to some merchants who bought from me over forty years ago. It seems to me a cause for self-congratulation when a salesman is able to hold the confidence of his trade for such a length of time.

It is a pleasant reflection also that many of the present buyers were boys in the stores where I sold goods at one time to their predecessors. Many other store boys are now proprietors of their own business, and buy from me. Many also are buyers for wholesale houses and there are a great number of travelling salesmen, both of middle age and younger, whose esteem I seem to possess, as I am invariably accorded gentlemanly respect whenever we touch on the road. This kindly recognition of a long life on the road is, I hope, not so much from any feeling of personal friendship for me, as it is an acknowledgment of the principles of the "square deal" which I have always practiced. As this friendliness is displayed by my competitors, it seems to me that I have a real reason to be thankful all along the line.

Selling goods on the road, or anywhere else, culti-

vates the spirit of friendliness in the right kind of a salesman. There is sure to come a time when the salesman will find it necessary to ask some one's aid, and then will come the test of his own friendship. For if we are friendly to others they will be friendly to us.

There is no doubt, however, that much as worthy friends add to the happiness and value of life, we must in the main depend on ourselves, and every one is his own best friend or worst enemy. Much certainly of the happiness and success of our lives depends upon our making a wise choice of our companions and friends. Many people seem to trust in the matter of making friends to the chapter of accidents, and to some extent travelling men are forced to accept their acquaintances by accident, and acquaintanceship often quickly ripens into friendship.

It is well and right, indeed, to be courteous and considerate to every one with whom you are thrown in contact, but to choose every one as real friends is quite another matter. Some persons seem to make a man a friend, or try to do so, because he lives near, because he is in the same business, travels on the same line of railway, or for some other trivial reason.

If our real friends are badly chosen they will inevitably drag us down; if chosen well they will just as inevitably raise us up. To be friendly with every one is another matter. We must remember that there is

no little enemy, and those who have ever really esteemed any one person will have some regard for all. There is some good in almost every man. I have heard many bitter complaints about the ingratitude and selfishness of the world. It may have been my good fortune, but I have very rarely suffered any injury from either of these conditions.

It is best to make as much effort to keep our friends as we made to attach them to us. Friendship gives no privilege to make ourselves disagreeable. It is very easy to be disagreeable for a few minutes and to find afterwards that we have lost our friend forever. It may be an unfortunate characteristic, but some people never seem to appreciate their friends until they have lost them.

If, then, we choose our friends for what they are, and not for what they have, and if we deserve the benefits and pleasures of friendship, then we shall always have our friends glad of the privilege of knowing us. Whenever a man rails at the ingratitude and falsity of the world, and holds himself up as a forlorn victim of the confidence he placed in his fellow-men, it may be safe in most cases to suspect that he was unwise in his choice of friends, or that he failed to accord to his fellow-man that good-will which is the very essence of friendship.

There are some men on the road who believe im-

plicity the dictum of Solomon, when he says: "All men are liars." I was once asked by a competitive salesman how my trade was. I replied that my trade up to July of that year was in excess of the business of the previous year. This answer to his question very much surprised him, as he had been working in a local territory where there had been many bank failures and where hail storms had injured the crops. He thought that all the world was suffering from a business decline, and with the look of surprise still on his face, he replied to my statement: "Well, there are two things that a salesman will lie about—his salary and his sales." I replied quietly that "I never lied about anything" and proceeded to prove to him the truthfulness of my assertion.

I then showed him the recent letter from my firm calling attention to the increase in my sales. He could not doubt the assertion that I had made verbally, when I also had documentary evidence to support it. This salesman evidently thought that all salesmen were so vain and so shallow that they dared not tell the truth.

I have met some buyers who habitually misled, or attempted to mislead me by making false statements. For example, when one of them asked me the selling price of a certain item, and I replied that my price was three dollars, he said that price was "just what

he had paid." I might have accepted this statement except for the fact that the competitor's bill for this item happened to be lying upon the counter and I could plainly read that this item had been billed at four dollars per dozen. The chief disadvantage about lying as a matter of good business policy is that the truth nearly always finds a way to make itself known, and it overwhelms the lie and is sure to do some harm to the liar.

In another instance, where a party had paid 70 and 10 and where my price was 75 and 10, he said, "just what he had paid." Occasionally a statement that seems like a barefaced falsehood is made through ignorance, especially where discounts are used and are not clearly understood by the buyer. For example, in one instance where my price was 80 and 25 off, and the buyer had declared that he had bought at "90 per cent. off," I requested that he allow me to look at his bill. I quickly showed him his error, for not being accustomed to figuring discounts, he had assumed that the "80 and 10" marked on the bill was the same thing as 90 per cent. off.

In conversation with other travelling men I find that some of them have experienced gross discourtesy from some prospective buyers. I must surely be fortunate never to have suffered from some of the experiences which they relate. Some of them declare

that their business cards have been thrown on the floor, or torn up, or that, upon tendering their cards, the buyer refused to take them. I never had any cases of this exact nature; but, of course, I have sometimes been accorded a very cold reception. I have also, a few times in my life, come in contact with members of the trade who seemed to think that it was necessary to insult me. I, however, always declined to accept even the grossest rudeness as an insult, or to get fighting mad over an exhibition of ignorance. I always remembered that I was not looking for a fight, but for business. And it is poor business for two men to get mad at the same time—unless they are in the fighting business.

On one occasion when the buyer was busy in the morning, he told me to come in after dinner. Therefore, after dinner, I came in and sat down on a chair to await his convenience. I sat there for some little time, expecting him, naturally, to come to me after awhile, or in some manner to indicate that he was ready to talk business. When he saw me sitting in the front part of his store, he walked over toward me and said: "You are a nuisance." This kind of treatment rattled me for a moment; but I quickly recovered my equanimity and continued to sit in the chair with every sign of perfect control of my temper. I did not say what the great majority of

travelling men would have said, but permitted him to walk away without any retort from me of an angry or defiant nature.

I continued to occupy the chair and curiously watched the buyer, for I wanted to know what move he would make next.

Finally he came over to where I was sitting, and without a single word of apology, for his previous boorishness, he said: "I will give you a little order." I wrote down his order without any display of ceremonious courtesy on my own side, but I felt that my patient self-control was not entirely wasted. If this man had not invited me in the morning, to come after dinner his rudeness would not have seemed so startling. Yet I must say that in this case I felt resentful at the treatment I had received from this man. I learned afterward that he had done some things which invited financial trouble, even if they were not infractious of the laws. He eventually became so unpopular, and got himself mired so deeply in a financial marsh that he was forced out of business entirely.

I have so many times been disappointed in not getting orders where I expected them that experience has taught me not to expect them until they are on the order book. In some cases I have received promises of orders in the future and yet when I

called on my regular business trip expecting to get them, I have been disappointed. This, however, is an experience not confined to myself, but is among the bunch of troubles which afflict the whole tribe of travelling men.

During my fifty-three years in the hardware business, fifty years of which were on the road, I have never been sick with any disease, except an attack of rheumatism. Only once during these years was I forced to stay off the road because of sickness. For six months on one occasion, I was laid up with rheumatism in my limbs and during part of this time I was quite helpless, and unable to do much for myself.

Like many another good thing few of us realize the blessings of health until we are sick. There may be some differences of opinion as to the advantages of wealth, but we are all agreed upon the advantages of good health. As Longfellow says: "Life without health, is a burden, but with health, it is a joy and gladness."

If there is any line of endeavor where robust health is an asset to be cherished, it is surely in the avocation of the travelling man.

In the matter of our own health, we can do more for ourselves than the doctors can do for us. Yet most of us scarcely realize how much we owe to the

doctors. Our system of medicine seems so natural and obvious that it hardly occurs to us as somewhat new and exceptional. When we are ill we send for a physician, who prescribes some medicine, which we take, and then we pay his fee. This is the system of medicine which we depend upon to cure us and restore us to good health. It is seldom that we reflect how fortunate for the travelling man that he does not have a medicine system like that in other countries, where a charm is written on a board, washed off and drank by the patient. In some cases the medicine is taken, not by the patient, but by the doctor. Such a system would not suit the travelling men. They are too practical and too anxious to get well.

But if all of us are agreed upon the desirability of good health, there are many who will not take the trouble to maintain it, or submit to the slight sacrifices necessary to enjoy it. No doubt there are some persons who inherit a constitution which renders health almost unattainable. But most of us might be well, if we would. It is often very much our own fault that we are ill. We do the things which we ought not to do and we leave undone the things which we ought to have done, and then we complain because there is so much ill-health in our lives. We all know that we can make ourselves ill; but few realize how

much we can do to keep ourselves well. Much of our suffering is self-inflicted. It is doubtful if the study of health is sufficiently impressed upon the minds of those who are just entering life. Not that it is desirable to patter over minor ailments, to study over books on disease, or experiment on ourselves with medicine. That is a bad way to learn how to be healthy. The less we fancy ourselves sick, or bother about little bodily discomforts, the more likely, perhaps, we are to preserve our health.

It is an old proverb that every one is either a physician or a fool at forty, and there is a great deal of the salt of truth in that proverb. Ill-health, however, is a poor excuse for moroseness. There is always a bright side; but, of course, an invalid who is trying to sell goods in competition with the healthy efforts of healthy men will surely go "down and out."

Many persons do not seem to know the simple requisites of health. Yet the rules of health are simply the rules of common sense—regular habits, daily exercise, cleanliness, and moderation in all things, in eating as well as drinking—would keep most people well.

It is unnecessary for anyone in these days to point out the evils of drinking intoxicants to excess, but we perhaps scarcely realize how much of the suffering and ill-humor of some people is due to over-eating.

Dyspepsia, for example, in nine cases out of ten, is caused by the sufferer's own undisciplined appetite, and very frequently arises from the combination of too much food with too little exercise. The old saying is packed with truth: "To lengthen your life, shorten your meals." Plain living and right thinking will secure health for most of us, though perhaps, it matters but little what a healthy man eats so long as he does not eat too much.

No doubt, however, though the rule not to eat or to drink too much is simple enough in theory, it is not quite so easy in application. There have been many Esaus who have sold their birthright of health for a mess of pottage.

It may seem paradoxical; but it is certainly true, that in the long run the moderate man will find more enjoyment even from eating and drinking than the glutton or the drunkard will ever obtain. The immoderate ones know not what it is to enjoy the real taste of common things.

And yet even if we were to consider the pleasure to be derived merely from eating and drinking, the same rule of temperance would hold good. A lunch of good bread and cheese after a long journey or a good walk will do a healthy man more good than six banquets in one day. Without wishing for the neck of a giraffe so that he may enjoy his dinner longer,

we need not be ungrateful for the enjoyment we derive from eating and drinking even though they be among the least intellectual of our pleasures. Eating and drinking are homely, no doubt, but they come morning, noon and night, and are not the least real because they do not seem to feed the brain and to make more business.

We speak truly of a healthy appetite, for it is a good test of our bodily condition, and indeed in many cases of the state of the mind also. Probably some of the discourtesies to which salesmen are subjected are often the result of someone's over-eating or over-drinking. It is especially true with reference to appetite, that to sit down to a dinner, however simple, after a walk or a journey, is no insignificant pleasure—if you are a temperate man.

Cheerfulness and good humor are also very advisable during meals. They are not only pleasant in themselves, but conduce greatly to health. It has been said that hunger is the best sauce, but most of us would prefer some good stories at a feast, even in preference to a good appetite. What salt is to food, wit and humor are to the mind, and it is certain that the state of the body is very greatly influenced by the mind.

It is not without reason that everyone resents the imputation of being unable to see a joke. Laughter appears to be the special prerogative of mankind, and

certainly laughter is generally supposed to be a favorite among travelling salesmen. Wit and humor, moreover, have solved many difficulties and decided many controversies.

But one may paraphrase the well-known remark about port wine and say that some jokes may be better than others, but anything which makes one laugh is good for the body and good for business. After all, it is a good thing to laugh at something and if it is only a straw to tickle a man it is an instrument of happiness and of health.

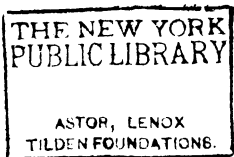
Those who live in cities may almost, as a rule, put it down as true that any time spent out of doors is not wasted.

We cannot always secure the sleep necessary to our preservation of health. When important decisions have to be taken, the anxiety to come to a right decision will often keep us awake. Nothing, however, is more conducive to healthy sleep than plenty of fresh air. Then, indeed, we can enjoy the fresh life of the early morning and of the late evening.

With reasonable care, then, most of us may hope to enjoy good health, and yet what a marvellous and complex organization we have. When we consider the wonderful complexity of our bodily organization it is a miracle that we should live at all, much more that the innumerable organs and processes should con-



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tinue day after day and year after year with so much regularity and so little friction that we are sometimes scarcely conscious of having a body at all.

And yet with reasonable care most of us can keep this organization in health, so that it will work without causing us pain or even discomfort, for many years, and we may hope that even when old age comes.

CHAPTER IX.

WASTED TIME ON THE ROAD.



HERE is an enormous amount of time wasted on the road that is unavoidable. There is, however, much valuable time wasted in the bars and billiard rooms of hotels which could surely be put to better and more profitable use. I have often thought that this waste of time was in most cases caused by lack of interest in the work. It seems that a travelling man who has his mind on selling goods will not let it be occupied with amusements which, when carried to excess, unfit him for his business.

Every day is a little life. All other good gifts depend on time for their value. What are friends, books or health, the interest of travel or the delights of home, if we have not time for their enjoyment. Time is often said to be money, but it is more. It is life. And yet many who would cling desperately to life think nothing of wasting time.

Not that a life of drudgery should be the ideal of the travelling man. Far from it. Time spent in harmless and rational enjoyments, in healthy games, family intercourse, friendly communion, is well and wisely spent. Games and exercise not only keep the body

in health, but give a command over the muscles and limbs, and discipline the mind also in a way which can not be overvalued. Moreover, there are temptations which strong exercise best enables us to resist.

It is generally the frivolous and the idle who complain that they cannot find the time to do that which they wish. It is surely true that people can find time for what they choose to do. It is not really the time, but the will that is wanting, and the vantage of leisure is mainly that we may have the power of choosing our own work. There are too many salesmen who have the idea that leisure is a very desirable thing because it confers the privilege of idleness. It is well to learn that it is not so much the hours that count as the way we use them.

There are many thinkers who have warned young men against idle habits, and doubtless with some success. "Idleness is the greatest prodigality in the world," said one great man in talking to young men. It throws away that which is invaluable in respect of its present use, and irreparable when it is past, being impossible to be recovered by power of art or nature. To burn always the gems of the days away like flame, to maintain this enthusiasm for work, is success in life. Failure is to form habits, for habit is sure to crystallize us in a backward place in the world. While everything else is melting away under our feet we may just as

well catch at the enthusiasm for work, for there is certainly no better way yet discovered of passing a life than to fill each hour with something done that is useful.

It is not work, but worry that kills, and it is in this sense, perhaps, that we are to "take no thought for the morrow" or "to consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." Wasted time is worse than no time at all. The man who wastes time will find that time is wasting him.

A man that chooses his own time will also choose his own company, and most surely choose his own actions. This very fact will make any industrious man self-reliant, and self-reliant men rarely fail.

If we deduct the time required for sleep, for meals, for dressing and exercise, etc., how little of our lives is really at our own disposal. It is not, however, the hours we live for other people which should be deducted, but those which benefit neither one's self nor any one else, and these hours are often very numerous on the road.

Yet some people are certainly dull and never seem to find the true way to get ahead. Some of them don't care, and some of them talk of a better world to come, while whatever dullness there may be here is all of their own making.

Time is, indeed, the very best thing there is in life

and if a man gets in the habit of wasting it he will never either be content nor succeed in anything he undertakes.

The will in youth is, as a rule, weak and irresolute, and ready to yield to a stronger contact, it may be for evil. It seems to be human nature to lean towards evil rather than good. A young man is at once simple and trusting, and yet self-confident. To a certain point he thinks nobody knows but himself; but he is the very reverse when he gets beyond that point. His experience makes him dependent, and look to others. He has no choice in this, for he is only a learner in the ways of the world and generally must have models and heroes, which he is continually changing. Unfortunately the young man too often fixes on pose models, for although almost fully matured in years, he is but a boy in simplicity.

Young men are generally credulous, and their credulity dies out slowly, and for years they look at things with exaggeration and wonder. We are slow in growing a sound judgment and still slower in using it rightly. Most young men have little individuality; they are rather prints from some negative they have chosen to copy. They give themselves wholly when they do so at all. Some business man or hero or head of the firm is reproduced in weak fac-similie.

Inexperienced youth is timid and yields to asser-

tion or fancied authority, and it is modest and hesitates even when right. It is clay in the hand of whatever potter may get it to work.

Bad habits and vice recruit their victims as much by want of firmness and by simplicity, as by a taste naturally for folly or wrong. Indulgence always educates a taste for wrong. We get from one step to another until we are gone. No one ever intends to be what too many become. They want the courage to say "No" at the very first, and all the rest follows.

Independent, manly self-respect is a force that keeps out much evil. Principle is of course needed; but firmness must give to principle its value. If you need copies, as you will, let them be right ones, and follow them only in what is right. Never be caught, young man, by appearances or fancy names of things or loud assertions, and never think any evil too small to avoid it. Temptation never comes with an open face. It always wears a disguise, and the disguise is generally one inviting to pleasure and an urging to do things in the easiest way.

The rashness of youth needs most caution, it is the twin sister to his self-confidence. It misjudges its strength both of doing and resisting. It rushes in where caution would keep as far away as possible, and suffers everyway by intemperate, ill-advised zeal. Indiscretion is natural to many, and is only slowly and

bitterly cured, if ever it be so at all. Words and acts equally show it, and its opinions are no less ill-balanced and lead to continual trouble, or it may be to lasting evil for life.

Want of sense is as fatal as any other defect, and less bearable by others than most faults. It cannot see its error in most cases, but stands stoutly in self-defense. No one is sure of it in any conjecture, for it has no reflections, and thinks only after it acts. Its feelings are stronger than its judgment, and it does not know how to look at a thing in all lights, or how to wait for the morning before determining its course. It sees only what it feels for the moment and exaggerates one part of duty to the forgetting of others as vital. It is contentious to excess and claims a monopoly of uprightness.

Character grows for the most part insensibly, and the foundations of all our character are laid in our youth. Now and then it gets notable impulses which we can mark, but generally it grows imperceptibly, like our bodies. Little by little the completed man comes to a finished job. Single acts may show character, but they seldom form it, though some acts are supreme and ruling, and occasionally a hasty act has changed the whole course of a life. Our habits form our character and are but another name for it. The

man's face is behind the boy's, but it grows out only after it has come through time and trouble.

We may for a time deceive people as to our true characters, but the very cheat and trickster is true to nature. When discovered it marks a moral blemish which goes to make up the man. There is no falsifying character, rightly read; to the wise observer the man and his act are substance and shadow. The light and shade of a man's character write themselves in a sun picture which is beyond bribery, and does not know flattery.

Character shines out which ever way we approach it. Life without it is only a mask.

What is called public opinion is the verdict of the world on it, and is courted and dreaded by those who defy everything else.

A good name is the best thing any young man can strive for. If a young man thinks that he can do without a good name he will surely drift into trouble. It is a strong illustration of the value of character that there is no legacy of more real value to children than the good reputation of a parent. To have been the son of a man whose memory lingers like life in the air is not only a fine memory, but a powerful stimulus and a great material aid in life. No household can be called poor with such an inheritance. The greatest good which our business firms can do to the young men of

the country is to leave behind them the memory of high ideals determinedly striven for. The character of the men who formed the firms in the old days before the civil war has doubtless animated many thousands of men to strive to emulate them.

Character is the only foundation for real success. There may be show of prosperity when principle is wanting, but if it tricks others it never tricks one's self. What the world calls good fortune is often the worst for peace and enjoyment. It is not possession, but the desire of it that gives pleasure. Without the spur of hope and ambition the mind loses its energy, and falls back on itself in listless laziness. It is the chase that delights, not the capture; and what looks bright in the air is often poor enough when we get it.

Still, while it is true that character is one more name for success, it is but a passive kind of success, although it gives an open door to whatever advancement our qualifications make possible. To be merely upright and trustworthy, is, of course, insufficient, for the porter may be as good a man as the proprietor, and yet the porter could not take the place of the proprietor. But, with due qualifications, a good name is the best means of attaining or keeping any promotion. Honest worth goes far of itself with very humble abilities, for mere commonsense and good princi-

ples count for more in the market than most of us suppose.

A young man may have any capacity, it will weigh nothing if confidence cannot be put in him. Interest has keen eyes, and every firm has its interest in its men, and the firm soon appraises its men at their true value. Appearance may deceive for a time, but once detected, the game is over. It counts for nothing that there be many good points; character alone gives them value. A slip may be condoned, but even the suspicion of any thing serious is fatal. We can find out the direction of the wind by the blowing of a very light feather. Want of confidence, like a rotten foundation, racks and brings down whatever may rest upon it, be it ever so good in itself. A look or a word may let out a long-masked hypocrisy, and no one can act and forecast so perfectly as to be never at fault. Many things, of course, may hinder advancement; slowness, idleness, want of judgment, incurable trifling, want of interest in a calling—but many of these will be borne for long and patiently striven with by some houses. A flaw in the man, however, is deadly; one whiff of a moral taint is enough for most firms. To be unsteady, dishonest, untruthful or in any way unreliable, is a hopeless handicap to a young man.

Character is the "open Sesame" to everything worth

while in business, and almost everything opens wide to its possessor.

It is a serious thought, that while we really live only in our own heads, since it is there alone we can be happy or wretched, in another sense we cannot live for ourselves alone, since we must color other lives and other lives must color ours. Our own character, if we trace it with keen eyes, will be found to be a reflection of a part of a hundred other characters and it may be impossible to know from where and how we gathered these reflections. A word from me, an act from another, have turned us this way and that, till we feel that it no less takes many minds to make a man than to make a world. It would be a curious feat to distribute all that is borrowed in any one. If we could trace the sources of our words and thoughts we would all be astonished.

Character, for good or bad, is magnetic, and attracts or repels all in its sphere. Examples and influence brighten or darken us; not that we cannot choose, but that, largely, we do not choose. When we least realize it our example and influence may be affecting others in their whole destiny.

Responsibility sobers men, but nothing is so important as the business and moral nature which grows in a man while he is living day by day. Yet character means many things in different mouths, and to some

extent in different places. There is one code for one circle and one code for another circle. There are as many consciences among men as there are prejudices or interests.

There is the degraded conscience or the perverted, the soft conscience or the hard one, the educated conscience and the ignorant. Our own moral sense, our own intuitions and hopes and aspirations are clearly unreliable. They may be talked aside, they may be color blind, and so are not only useless to us; but become the means of injuring us. To keep the character strong is no easy task and many young men seem unable to resist the influence of others.

Never forget that wrong doing cannot pay any one in the end. It may promise pleasure or profit, but it is an old story of weakness which is learning by bitter experience. Let nothing tempt you to a false step, whatever necessity or pretext may urge. Young men are often led astray by the fine names given to misconduct. It is good-fellowship, or gameness, or seeing the world, or wild oats, or some other fine name; but often it means failure, and all the fancy names won't change it.

Never think anything too small to be worth while. It is the little things that count. It is the first step that causes most of the trouble. Take the first false step and all the rest follow naturally. The thought leads

to the look, the look to the word, and the word to the act. Lewdness, drunkenness, theft, lying, are only the end of perhaps very slight beginnings. He that loses his way thinks that he is on the right road till it suddenly dawns on him that he is lost. If the story of a confirmed drunkard were known it would commonly show that the start was made in a very modest and innocent way. Pleasant evenings with friends, first the sitting with men over a bottle and then the liking of the conviviality comes until it is a confirmed habit.

Dishonesty very rarely begins by intended theft. It is a loan at first; then it cannot be repaid; then comes the theft, which is not at once detected, and then the character is blackened forever. Debt for what seemed needed may be the original impulse, or to get a trifle for pleasure or luxury; but all lead to the same end. Or you first look at what is not your own, then like it, then handle it, then at last take it. Safety lies only in keeping clear of any approach to what is doubtful.

CHAPTER X.

INDUSTRY AMONG TRAVELLING SALESMEN.

ENERGY is an immense aid to success. A young man may have brains, but if he has not energy to apply his brains tirelessly and persistently he cannot come within touching distance of success. It is energy that not only makes opportunity, but fits a young man for the opportunity when it comes.

Sometimes you meet a man who has very poor judgment and very poor business ability, yet is gifted with an abundance of energy. When such a man succeeds it often causes those who know him to wonder how he did it. The real reason is simple. It is because energy, or force of character, pushes him ahead in the doing of things, while the more scientific man is laying out a plan and thinking how the work ought to be done.

The energetic salesman is never looking for trouble or discouragement. When trouble or discouragement comes to the energetic man they find him so busy that he has not the time to think about them. The energetic man is not that type of salesman who is always in a hurry. A man can be in a hurry and still never find time to go after business. The right kind of an ener-

getic man is the one who has his mind on his business. I have seen many salesmen who are always in a hurry, yet never seem to accomplish much. Others never seem to be in a hurry and yet accomplish a great deal. If a man has fifty letters to answer it makes no difference which one he answers first. It is only common industry and common sense to go ahead and answer them, without wasting the time to choose carefully those which can be left to the last.

The energetic man is not the kind who believes in luck. He is a man who has the element of persistence so abundantly in his system that he don't know how to let go and holds on when every other man has lost faith and courage. The energetic man depends on himself, and this very self-reliance fills him with vigor and a determination to go right ahead. He don't know what else to do. The energetic man don't know what else to do because he has not formed the habit of thinking how to get hard work done in the easiest possible way. His way is to get it done right away and is not particular to observe all the rules laid down for doing it. The energetic man is not afraid to go off the beaten track if he can get any business by it.

The right kind of an energetic man is interested with his whole heart in his own business. He is not selfish, but he is trying to do the best he can for himself because he knows that it is his duty. There are many

well-meaning men who think that they understand your business better than you do yourself. These kind of fellows are always busy in other men's affairs, and often neglect their own. They are the victims of their own misplaced energy. You will find them ready for anything you may need, and often when you don't want them, they are offering advice and assistance to you about your affairs. They are willing to be everywhere except on their own jobs, and leave their own interests to take care of themselves while they are talking things over with some hotel clerk or deep in discussions in the billiard room.

This type of an energetic misfit seems to find pleasure in exercising his wits in outside occupations. He delights in hearing his own voice or in showing off his knowledge or skill, and often the pleasure of gossiping seems to be as good as a meal to him. He is often trying to sell several side lines, or is laden down with some side-scheme, which seems to indulge his dislike of a steady application to any one thing; but after a while the side schemes are forgotten and superseded by some other unprofitable proposition. Serious, continuous work is not suitable for the erratic brains of this type of salesman. His strong point seems to be to make beginnings and he only takes to his calling in fits. His mainspring of action is impulse or vanity. As a rule he is busy in other lines; but idle on his job.

There are some drones on the road, as in all other callings, but they don't stay long on the road. They are seen a few times, make a few complaints and then they disappear. The drone does nothing if he can help doing it. He leaves things go as they may and puts off to-day what will cost twice the labor to-morrow. He lets chances go past him rather than rouse himself and go after them. He has always some good excuse for putting things off. If he must work, he does as little as possible and often talks longer about doing it than it takes others to act. He never stands if he can sit and hates to get himself worked up to the least show of enthusiasm or to hurry towards anything useful.

He does as much studying how to do nothing as most people do in trying to do much. As the saying runs: "The lazy man remembers he has a salary to receive; but forgets he has a duty to perform." He is sometimes as mean as he is shiftless and willing to take without giving any equivalent. He toadies so that he may silence criticism of himself or that he may gain apologists and trusts to friends rather than to himself. The drone is never likely to have enough enthusiasm in anything to get himself into trouble in doing the work.

He makes up in hope what he lacks in working force. He is always just about to do something very soon. His hours stretch out into days, and he lazes

through them as if never rightly awake. His life is all starts and promises, stops and failures, unrealized plans and hopes, buds that never ripen into fruit. He often begins with the brightest prospects, but he loses them one by one, and at each loss he slips lower until he finds some position where he can just preserve his existence without preserving his self-respect.

Sometimes this kind of man is a merchant. Then he is late at the store or his office, and is often away from it. He is hearty only at idling and hunts up companions of his own kind when he can find the leisure and either whiles away valuable hours in useless conversation, or dozes at home. If he succeeds in surviving in his business every employee around the place absorbs his appearance, for they catch his character. He is the kind of a man who lets his stock get old and out-of-date and there is generally a visible layer of dust on the shelves and a general air of forlornness and decay all around the place. If this kind of a man is an employee in a house that is at all progressive he is only retained through pity or until the firm can overcome their reluctance to discharge him.

The man who is in business and affects the role of a man-about-town is another variety of American who is sure to go "down and out," if you only give him time enough. He is commonly well supplied with money left to him by a wiser father, though appearances must

not always be trusted, for there are many men who affect the character of men-about-town, with very little cash to back up their pretensions. But these imitations of wealthy sparks are generally only copies in mind as well as pocket and trade on a reputation for money and make believe that they have it themselves. The race of adventurers is not extinct, and they flourish for a time in every calling, although not so common or so successful, perhaps, as in the days before the war.

As this game of pretense is expensive, if played well, money must be forthcoming, by gambling if not in any better way, or by sponging on those who have it. The days are dragged out before the bar, in the smoking room, on the porch, and the evenings are given to the opera, the theatre, frivolous society or the gambling room. Dress, dining and drinking fill up much of the time and still more of the thoughts.

This kind of man is never earnest in any direction; their whole existence is a succession of stale jokes, light gossip and empty town talk. This kind of man is always looking for something new, for it gives him something to repeat and he always tells the last story as if he had discovered and invented all the circumstances connected with it. Very few of this race have any plan of life. They do not think deeply or thoroughly on anything and very few of them try to learn by reading other people's thoughts. Their life is hol-

low and unnatural. The amusements of a congenial society are about all they are capable of seeing in life.

Now, while being jolly is a fine help to any man who has goods to sell, there are some fellows who think that if they are jolly and are good mixers that they know all about the business game. When a man makes a specialty of being jolly he ought to go on the stage, as there is not enough in jollity without capacity to make road life or business life a paying proposition. He is so full of animal spirits that he cannot settle down to scientific selling industry. This jolly idea of salesmanship is somewhat of a heritage from the story-telling and time-killing race who sold in every country store during the past generation. His thoughts run on play rather than on work.

When he should be busy he is planning a holiday, and when forced to stay at his desk he is thinking how he can spend his next leisure, or how he has spent his last. He is a great authority on baseball or race horses or the latest yarns.

When the jolly fellow is young he is so full of animal spirits that he impresses most people as a man of energy and a fellow who can dig up the business. Of course, he does some business, or he wouldn't hold on to his position; but as he gets older he deludes himself into the belief that the excitement he creates for himself is the main object of life, and very

often he imbibes more drink than he can carry in a gentlemanly manner.

There are some men who seem to sink out of sight simply through listless depression and helplessness through misfortune. Sometimes, perhaps, this is from inherent defects of character, perhaps from the misconduct of others, perhaps from the unfortunate changes of affairs, their prospects collapse, and with them, whatever hope or energy they may have had passes away forever. They live ever afterward under the shadow of their calamity, helpless, spiritless, broken. They have no future and their past is only a mist, tinged here and there with the bright colors of their deeds—wrecks of their hopes, which they are weak enough to allow to sink into their minds.

The troubles of this kind of men have benumbed them, and left them a mere automatic life. We have all seen this type of men sink into mere shadows, silent ghosts, or busy at best in talking about their long-hopeless affairs, as if hope still soothed him by fond deceptions, unwilling to leave any circumstance of his past untold. For the ordinary work of life this kind of man is incapable. Pity is the one feeling for such human shadows; their fate saddens us a little, but when they get in the way of busy people they are liable to disgust us with their useless sorrow.

A great hindrance to the success of many business

men is their passion for stock gambling. This kind of business man is often prone to think that his wits are sharper than other people's. Instead of determining to devote his efforts to making money from hard work at his business, he is always dreaming how he can make a lucky strike in the stock market. Very often this type of man passes for a wealthy Napoleon of finance until the crash comes. There are some exceptionally acute and strong minds who are fortunate in the manipulation of stocks. But with most business men it is a losing game and brings trouble at the end. One of the worst effects of the stock-gambling habit is its effect on the credit—and no man has yet discovered how to build up a business without credit.

There are occasionally met some men in business who seem to be unable to discipline their minds to the routine necessary for success. Many of this class might do all right in the professions. It seems to be a fact that ignorance or incompetence has a better chance of getting a livelihood in the professions than in commerce. It is certainly true, or nearly true, that a crafty or decorous bluff may be made as a lawyer or a doctor by a man who has good wits. It is without a doubt true that no man can make a success in business without work and ability.

There is nothing so common as idleness and there

is nothing that breeds bad habits like a want of interest in your work. The way some of us are born has much to do with our lives. Some are born restless, active and energetic; others slow and lethargic. But most of us are neither one or the other at first, and may school ourselves into useful, industrious habits or insensibly fall into the opposite.

Health, which is one of the chief secrets of success, is a gift of industry, for the idle man is never so cheerful or well as the man who turns willingly to his work. Of course, overwork, or work without open air, injures or ruins the health, but, as a rule, the industrious man is a healthy man. Work and play, rightly divided, will keep most men in healthy equipoise of muscle and brain.

The sleep of the industrious worker is sweet and nourishes both body and brain. Industry economises its leisure at evening or morning and finds health while idleness is watching the clock during working hours or sleeping overtime. Industry is the best and most useful form of temperance, using its energies rightly, weakening them by no excesses. The industrious man's eye is clear, his brain is fresh, his spirits cheerful, his strength firm, and every part of him is ready to serve his vigorous will. The idle man is heavy, listless, absent-minded; loses his chance by want of readiness and is never in fighting shape for

any opportunity along the line of advancement. We often hear of men who half kill themselves to gain a position. They would have gained it far more surely, and had enjoyment in their success, had they cared for their health. There is a kind of sensible industry, which saves all our forces for one useful end; and there is the industry of the squirrel in his cage, who climbs around his wheel all day and still finds himself at the bottom at night.

When work thus violates the laws of good sense it is also breaking the laws of nature. It then forfeits much of its good; but, wisely used, work is the secret of vigor. Weakness in body will make weakness in brain, and feebleness can do nothing as well as health. The faculties are bound to fail with the bodily powers. Activity stimulates the young man to all that makes him strong. Sensible exercise braces the nerves and makes the limbs alert. It finds an hour for recreation without touching on other duties. Even when pressed by too much confinement, it can make more of its chances than idleness could of far greater opportunities.

It is difficult to see how there could be any success in common business without industry. It would be unnecessary to speak so much about the need of industry, except for the fact that so many young people seem to think that there is some secret and easy way

to succeed without it. To have the character for industry is the passport to favor, not only with your employers, but with your customers. To practice industry gives, daily, additional power and worth. In the struggle and competition on every side and in every calling, laziness is left behind at the start. The laws of competition demand application and diligence, if we would not be outdistanced.

Men stand too thick on the ground for laziness to have a chance, and the strong outgrow the weak. If a man succeeds it is because he is industrious, and if he is industrious it is because he is strong. Industry saves the minutes, acts with full knowledge, gives its heart to its work, keeps its eyes and ears open, is always rather too soon than too late.

Industry always meets opportunity as it comes.

Idleness is always toiling after opportunity and complaining because of the swiftness of the times. Many an industrious man turns worthlessness into new wealth, and is quick at seeing improvements and in using them. Everything that we see is the result of industry, for civilization, in every detail, is the creation of work.

Brainy men, or geniuses, it is sometimes thought, can afford to be idle; but there can be no greater mistake. The great men of the world were none of them idlers. If you take the successful men in any city, any

town or village, and you will not find them idlers. There never was a task accomplished without patient toil, and no business will grow unless the proprietor works either with his brains or his hands.

But there must be intelligence. Mere power is useless alone, quick-witted Jacks always get the better of the slow-witted giants. Whatever the business, inventiveness, adaptability, brightness, must direct and utilize our forces, and a clear, wise, well-informed head must find markets or make them. Wooden nutmegs do find a sale, but it cannot be counted on. Merit gets its reward. In the keen struggle shrewd quickness is indispensable. In business a man need not know many books, but he must know his trade, and know something of human nature. A man may be slow at an argument, but he must jump at a chance like a bird for a worm. He may be conservative outside, but in his calling he must shape himself to every occasion, and turn his head or hands to every fresh inducement.

Of course, the more education you have, the better for you. A man in these days is sadly handicapped without schooling. But even if childhood and early youth had little chance, intelligence will strive to make up its lee-way rather than lose; and the very effort will sharpen the faculties and go very far towards winning some kind of success.

The commerce of America is not in the hands of scholars, but in the hands of practical men, for the most part men who know their business. These men have their hearts in their work and know how to push it. Stupid men may happen to succeed, but, as a rule, they are like bulldogs racing against greyhounds. Fixed modes and forms are very well in their way, but there are limits to red tape and routine. Never stick to a thing simply because it is old; never dismiss a proposal just because it is new or novel.

The more intelligent you are the less likely you are to be bound by stupid conservatism. The more liberal your education, if you be not above your business, the more chance of your making your mark. It takes scientific farming to raise wheat on sand, and modern business life is all sand. We should not forget that the men who, in countless enterprises, have proved such incapable failures; who have stained our name and paralyzed credit, are largely commercial magnates who had passed their time of strength. How much has it to do with their disastrous incompetence, that the education, and consequent largeness of view of these heroes is, as a rule, only that of the counting-room and stock exchange?

Character and intelligence are two rounds on the ladder, industry is a third round. We don't so much refer to principles; we have advised about the im-

portance of that kind of character before. Individuality, decision, energy, are equally necessary parts of character. The trouble with some is that they have no character at all in respect to the manly virtues, or habits of mind, which tell the real man in action.

Harmless enough, perhaps, these men have no personality, no color, no opinions, no self-reliance, no incisive vigor. Perfectly common-place, they are the stragglers in the army of life. They are like the buttes on a western landscape, the portrait of one would do for the picture of any of a thousand. They are ciphers of humanity, who need some true man to stand before them to give them value. They are human clay, for others to knead and bake and build into fortunes. They don't know what manly strength of character means. They pass and repass like shadows and almost beg pardon for being alive.

Good, strong self-respect lies at the bottom of manly decision. A just and dignified self-confidence which does not bow irresolutely before either things or men. Modesty is a very good thing, but it does not require you to have no opinions or choice, and to keep you following after one thing or another, like a lost dog. The hesitating man who cannot decide for fear of making a bad bargain, is costly in every sense.

Firmness and decision, after due thought and inquiry, are inseparable from any conception of manli-

ness. It is grand to be self-reliant, to hear opinions, it may be, but to judge and act for one's self. Good abilities, with common shrewdness, and a knowledge of the point as well as an interest in it, are as likely to decide for you rightly as a stranger. Advice is generally a bow at a venture; it might hit, but often misses. We know so little of each other that it is always to a more or less conjectural man, at a more or less conjectural case, we speak, when we use it.

Weakness looks round for other people's opinions. Manliness looks within itself for advice. In a difference between friends it refuses to call in any third party, and insists that friendship and sound sense shall settle it. Weakness has a cartilaginous character, which has nothing harder in it than gristle; and there is a softening of the bones, which brings helplessness. The irresolute man defies definition except as a weakling, and is either a cloud, a rock or a weasel at different times.

The irresolute man can not be depended on. He is valiant in advance, but unavailable when you need him. Irresolute men are like trees growing in the sand, with roots running in every direction, but no grip after all. Self-reliance means that other men will look to you. Irresoluteness means that you will look to other men. A strong will draws men and things after it, as the drift follows a boat.

Decision and energy go together, but promptness is needed as well in any fighting business. Some men are decided enough in the end and always regret that they had not made their decisions so much earlier. Character of the true type for success is as energetic in its deliberations and in its decisions as in the action that follows.

Many a man mistakes pride or obstinacy for decision. There are occasionally met with some men who are obstinate and persist in a course until it envelops them in ruin. Respect for others, and remembrance of our past mistakes, are needed by most of us as checks. Here, again, the man of superior intelligence shows his superiority, for it is generally the man of inferior knowledge who ruins himself through his own stubbornness.

With all qualities, we must balance and temper them, that none be in excess; for, in character, as in body, one gross defect spoils all. Violent temper, or untruthfulness, or breaches of confidence, or morbid vanity, or want of common sense, or mere lightness and carelessness.

It is not enough to have good qualities. It is important that one bad feature of our natures does not neutralize our good qualities. Many a young man often wonders how he does not get on, or why he should be disliked, while he is conscious of abilities

and of a generous nature. He has some fault that taints all his good points, like a dead carcass in a green lane.

Honesty in thought, expression and deed, are essential to attain any success worth the name. In a young man absolute truth and uprightness should become an instinct. The love of work and excellence in it is generally associated with honesty. It is almost necessary for any kind of success that honesty should accompany industry. The employe should be careful to give a little more than a dollar's worth of work to his employer in return for a dollar of pay. The interests of the employer are the interests of all who work for him, and your character must be not only above crime, but above suspicion. Let nothing tempt you to cross the sacred line of integrity.

One lie in either word or act opens the doors to a thousand others. It is an important thing in the rules of success—this practice of honesty. Be honest in your thoughts, not as to money alone, but as to all things—your time, your attention, your service to customers, and it will pay you in the end. To get the name of being an honest man opens many a door which would otherwise be closed.

Never admit that it is right to do wrong, and never do it. Have only one standard of morality for your private life and your business life, and stick to it re-

gardless of all temptations. There is an old saying that "a man can not be honest and live." It is often on the lips of young fellows; but it is untrue, for the world is full of honest men who are successful. The truth is that you can't be dishonest and live in any good sense. To get a full purse and a dead conscience is a poor exchange. It does not pay in the long run to have people say that you are smart, if they think that you are dishonest. Honesty is certainly a great part of a good character, and character is the best capital in the world. For the want of character brings contempt, and contempt is often enough the beginning of worldly ruin. Distrust, like strong weeds, exhausts the soil after one seeding; a good name gets crop after crop.

Honesty is a sworn foe to debt, and an honest man spends no more than he earns. Debt is a millstone around many a young man's neck, and if it is not got rid of it will drown him in trouble. Be manly enough to seem what you are, and while you by no means parade poverty, never hide your poverty at the cost of being honest. Make the very best appearance you can and let it go at that.

Pay as you go and you will save many a headache and many a heartache. Be content to begin life at the beginning, and not where your father left off. Learn to work and to wait, as the head of the firm

had to do, before you want to start living on an automobile scale and to indulge yourself in unsubstantial luxuries.

Ambitious, reckless commencements are the ruin of thousands, bringing anxiety, overwork and debt. Extravagant men are sooner or later tempted to drain the business of its capital, and to live on creditors rather than gains. When a man takes the large end of the horn of plenty he very often comes out at the small end.

We have all met some men who seem to think that meanness, both in youth and all through life, is a main help to success, but no mistake could be greater. The mean man is underhanded. He sneaks, listens, bribes, sweats, takes unfair advantages, has always some secret reservations, promises and retracts, pays the lowest wages, is suspicious of every one and imagines every one is suspicious of him.

This kind of a man seldom makes money. If he gets hold of a customer and sells him, he treats him so unfairly that it is nearly always the last sale to that customer. The mean man is necessarily a hard man to do business with in more ways than one. Whoever falls into his power will never forget it. He must get money, come how it may. But if there is such a thing as luck, then there is no luck that comes with a mean man's money. Generosity and liberality are honored

and trusted in business. Grinding policies are unpopular in business, and take risks that are not worth the gains. The firm or the business that once gets the reputation of being hard and mean lives under a cloud. Tales go round of honorable men who have been pushed to the wall, and of goods sold under guarantees that were never kept.

When any young man is willing to work and to wait he is on the right road. It may seem sometimes that others apparently rush into prosperity. But appearances are often deceptive. Many a pretentious establishment envies an humbler one, because the humbler one dreads no collapse and has no fear of its notes going to protest, or that it can't honor a draft. Don't try to push Providence. To be safe is worth taking time. Even while under others as an employe, there is much in waiting your turn—not losing it, but letting it ripen. As a general rule, any man succeeds best who, having chosen a calling, sticks at it, using every legitimate help to advance himself, but waiting changes or unsettled policies.

Having picked out your business, stick to it, if you find that it suits you. Many times the life-work of a young man is chosen for him by his parents. The choice proves unsuitable, and a great part of the young man's time is passed in a distasteful occupation, and he either succeeds in his attempts to change or wastes

his time in dispirited complaints and regrets. Many men abandon the employment on which the precious years of youth have been wasted, before finally fixing their course in life.

It is always hard to know what to do with ourselves in early youth. Our inexperience, our indecision, our very position, leaving us often unable to take the best course. It is the necessity of doing something that decides us in most cases, and many times the necessity is our salvation. But the wishes of a young man are the surest and safest guides. What a boy sighs to be, and strives towards, shows for what he is fitted in most cases.

But success comes in many ways and every man must work toward it in the way which suits his capacity best. If you gain wealth, get it worthily, and use it properly. If you are getting only a living, be sure that if you get it honestly you will find that you have at least succeeded in being happy. After all, to have lived well is better than to have made money.

CHAPTER XI.

OPENING UP A NEW TERRITORY.



HERE are many things to learn about successful salesmanship, and the man who starts out to work new territory will learn many of them in quicker time than in any other way.

New territory requires a man who has good judgment and a good manner. The good manner is always useful, but especially so in introducing yourself and in introducing your goods. If your goods are of good quality you will have faith in them, and if you communicate your faith to your customer and succeed in selling him on the first trip, your goods will make you welcome when you are making your second call.

In talking on any subject there are certain words and sets of words which best express a certain meaning. The politician, the lecturer, the auctioneer, the drummer all study the effect of words in conveying attractively and strongly a certain idea. There is a responsive chord in certain words which will hold the ear and the mind of the customer. It is wise to find out what words will best suit your argument. There is no better way to find the strong phrases for salesmanship interviews than in studying the goods them-

selves and in learning all about them. Knowledge of anything stimulates thought, and no one can talk either entertainingly or convincingly without much laborious thought in all the phases of scientific selling. There is, of course, the need of judgment in human nature; but that only comes with experience, for there are a myriad of types of human nature, and it is impossible for a man in new territory to know what types he will meet.

Every detail bearing on the new territory to be covered should be accumulated and studied. The character of the population, the consuming power of the people, the buying power of the merchants, the recent industrial history of the section, where there were strikes, or crop failures, etc.

It is just an exercise of good common sense to invite your friends to volunteer any information they may possess about the territory. It may be that there are some books which contain information bearing upon the territory, or some available statistics of wealth produced there, or tables showing what kind of manufactured goods were sold there in the past few years, and whether the demand is increasing or declining. There are a hundred sources of information open and it is wise to use them all.

If there are any goods in your line being advertised in the new territory, it is well to know just where this

advertising is being done, and what has been the effect so far. In estimating your territory and its possibilities, the kind of advertising and the volume of it will aid you in judging what you ought to expect from your best efforts.

Find out what kind of people can afford to buy your particular goods. Find out what income they must possess to be probable consumers of your kind of goods. It will help you to estimate, along with the statistics, how many possibilities of sale there are in the territory per thousand of its inhabitants. These are all factors of some importance in the framing up of any up-to-date campaign in new territory. If you examine and compare carefully you will never make the mistake of trying to sell expensive lawn-mowers in a territory where the people have no lawns, or try to find a market for any article which is beyond the reach of the income of the consumers.

The census figures about any territory are invaluable in gauging the possibilities of that territory. From these figures you may learn what proportion of the inhabitants are engaged in manufacturing, in agriculture, in the transportation occupations, and in store-keeping. For example, the census figures for 1900 show there were 16,000,000 families in the United States. Fifty-one per cent. of the population lived in the country, ten and one-third per cent. was semi-

urban, and thirty-seven and one-third per cent. lived in cities and towns.

Nearly thirty-three per cent. of all these families had an average income of less than four hundred dollars per year, or about eighty dollars per capita. Only twenty-one per cent. of these families had an annual income of four hundred dollars to six hundred dollars. Only eighteen per cent. of these families had an annual income of six hundred dollars to nine hundred dollars. Only ten and one-half per cent. of them had an annual income of nine hundred to twelve hundred dollars. Only seven and one-half per cent. of them had an annual income of eighteen hundred to three thousand dollars.

Of the automobile class, only five per cent. had an income of over three thousand dollars per family, or six hundred capita. These figures will set any salesman thinking, and he will be able to arrange his trip so that the results of it will not disappoint him.

The line of talk necessary to sell any article depends very much on what the article is and kind of a market you are trying to sell in.

Storekeepers are just average Americans of good intelligence, considerable shrewdness, and large bumps of incredulity. Most of them seem to have come "from Missouri," because they all have "show me"

ever ready in their minds, when any plausible proposition is made to them.

The storekeeper must eventually show the strong points of the proposition to the consumer, and it is up to the salesman to load the mind of the storekeeper so full of strong, convincing selling arguments that he will catch a fine case of enthusiasm for the goods. The storekeeper is willing to be shown if the arguments are sensible enough, as well as simple enough, to appeal readily to his mental make-up. He is not suffocating for funny jokes or stump-speech oratory. What he wants badly, what he is in business for, is to find some good article to put in stock that he can sell to his customers at a profit.

New territory means the discovering and developing of new customers where they were not previously known to exist. It is pioneer work of the hardest kind and it does the man good who succeeds in it. It is not only a test of the manhood in a man, but a proof that he has the true elements of salesmanship in him if he makes good. He will know what competition has to be met in that territory, and what methods must be used to hold it against competitors. He will have such a clear view of the new market that he will know if it is possible to increase the volume of sales and profits.

There is certainly no test of a salesman's capacity

like the ability to make good and to hold up his sales, if not increase them, in new territory. His experience puts him into possession of those facts which have enabled most successful men to rise, and gives him the reasons for the failure of the unsuccessful ones. For many of the greatest men in the business world have made their start and proved their ability in working up new territory. Any of them will acknowledge that his experience in an entirely unworked field had given him an opportunity to understand the principles of human nature, as well as the principles of salesmanship.

Those who fail in covering new territory are accustomed to offer apologies for their failure. Many of them declare that they are not gifted with enough "gall" to sell goods. This excuse has satisfied the young man's conscience and been a salve to his friends, when the real reason is that the young man had not enough energy and natural business qualifications. There is certainly no place in the whole business world where a young man's business abilities can be brought out more effectually than in making good in a new territory.

It is a great error for a young man to feel the importance of his position, or for him to think that the firm which he represents is so well known and trusted

that all he has to do is to announce that he is representing it to succeed in getting orders.

The modest spirit is the only sensible one for any man to feel when he starts on the road. Without this spirit he can not get down to hard work, and can not concentrate his mind on the small things of business. If he forms the habit of thinking that he is not one bit superior to the humblest storekeeper, he is sure to be on the right track to get business. By putting himself on a plane of perfect equality with every one he will be able to learn how other people think. And without knowing the habit of thought of our probable customers it is a hopeless fight to attempt to win their trade.

The other man's viewpoint is one of the most important of the things to learn. Some salesmen know how the customer ought to look at a proposition, but never trouble themselves to learn exactly what are the customer's real thoughts. It is a very difficult and thankless undertaking to try and sell any man a thing he don't want. It is, however, a fine piece of work if you can talk him into wanting the thing you have for sale.

The expense account should always be kept as low as you can decently afford. There is no necessity, as a rule, of being niggardly, but the more economical the habits are when formed in youth the less money

will be spent in useless extravagance. The desire to make a show is strong among young salesmen, and it often happens that their minds are more occupied in impressing the town with their affluence than it is in selling goods. The home firm likes to have its salesmen appear creditably prosperous, but it is not going to welcome any useless expense account even if the orders are sufficiently profitable to cover the expense.

It is not good policy to work new territory with the idea of getting everything out of it the first trip and leaving nothing for the future. The idea which will pay in the end is that you are there to introduce your goods and to make as favorable an impression as possible. A good impression is a lasting asset, and the salesman who intends to stay in the business will not fail to study how to make it on the first visit.

If the desire to sell to a customer, regardless of his interests, becomes offensive to him, it shows a fatal lack of judgment in the salesman. The salesman and the merchant are both after profits, and the salesman should co-operate in every way with the merchant. The storekeeper's interests are the interests of the salesman. Neither of them will prosper in the best sense if they are ruled entirely by the mercenary spirit alone.

CHAPTER XII.

HAVE SELLING METHODS IMPROVED?



It is the prevailing belief that inherent business capacity was not so general a generation ago as it is at present. I think this is a mistaken estimate. There is no doubt in my mind that the men in the hardware trade of the last generation, from the clerks to the merchants, were of as high a type as those engaged in the business to-day. The volume of business has increased so enormously that it is difficult to make any intelligent comparison; yet the mind voluntarily estimates the ability and the ethics of the past and the present.

The principles of buying and selling were as well understood and as skillfully practiced during the last generation as they are now. A successful business man, and a winning salesman, were as highly esteemed then as they are to-day.

It was understood then, as it is now, that aside from technical knowledge, the chief qualification of a good buyer is a judgment of goods and values, of a salesman a judgment of men. It was understood then, as now, that both should have a special acquaintance with the natural laws governing sales and contracts—

that is, the laws which arise from the common experience of the whole race of buyers and sellers.

It may be true that loquacity and a talent for story-telling was considered a more important factor in salesmanship formerly than it is now. And perhaps this loquacity and joke-telling encouraged much harmless lying. These assertions made in bargaining were mostly mere badinage. Generally they were substitutes used for want of a better argument, and often were an indication of poverty of wit. Many of the falsehoods in all business bargaining are about irrelevant matters, not pertaining to the sale.

A hard thing for the young salesman to get into his head is the fact that *cost* is never a matter pertinent to the sale. It is not to be presumed that a man who is in his right mind is selling at cost, and what he paid, or his firm paid, for the goods is an interesting inquiry of no practical importance. The reasons which make a man anxious to sell are sometimes, but rarely, necessary to be mentioned. Lying seems to be a natural defect in some men, and must be viewed in the same charitable light as the natural propensity of some other men for kleptomania, so often illustrated by the hotel guest who puts the bathroom soap in his pocket. In other men it is a confirmed habit—they have lied so long and so often that it has become a second nature to them. Loquacious men cannot al-

ways command the time necessary to stop and recollect the truth. But intelligent people have never considered the ability to lie a qualification of a good buyer or an expert salesman.

A good buyer was, and is, a man of few words. He posts himself as to the market, regards much comment on the part of the seller as an incentive to be wary, and all pretenses to confidential favors, unless proved to be such by documentary evidence, as a reproach upon his understanding. When the matter is in any wise doubtful, he demands a warranty or guarantee, as the case may require, knowing that no reasonable man can object to his securing himself against contingencies.

An expert salesman in every generation must have a thorough knowledge of human nature. He is a business negotiator—to trade what the statesman is to politics and government. He must have courteous manners and a ready tact in adapting himself to the various humors of the buyers. He has perfect command of his business and has no hesitation in fairly recommending his goods, or warranting them when requested to do so. His great object and aim has always been and will always be, to acquire the confidence of the trade. To this end everything must bend and tend. Truthfulness is a trump card in his hands for this purpose, and he avoids all doubtful or sus-

picious assertions of favor or sacrifice, even if true, unless he has the documents at hand to prove their truth. He rarely mentions the cost of his goods, knowing well that his customers do not expect him to sell without a profit, or fearing that they would disbelieve him, which would destroy confidence. He has a quick appreciation of the wants of his customers, and does not comment with equal praise upon all kinds or styles of goods to all persons. He catches at the fancy of the buyer, and presses delicately upon that fancy; or, if it is an injudicious choice, he points out its defects, and produces a more suitable article, and thus inspires confidence. He does not treat any customer with familiarity, nor does he worry any one who is not disposed to buy at the time with over-ardent solicitations; but he tries to leave upon their minds such an agreeable and favorable impression that they will be sure to feel a sense of pleasure in seeing that salesman again.

In every successful salesman's mind there is built up some kind of a business creed. Often it has never been put into words; but it would read something like this if it were written down:

I believe that the life of business is profit; and, as a general rule, I will not make sales without profit. "To sell low for cash, never mind profits" is not my maxim. I will use every precaution with a stranger

that I would wish to have done should he turn out to be a villain, and yet treat every man as an honest man until he proves himself to be otherwise.

Discretion in speech is more than eloquence.

It is not all that can be sold to a customer that is well sold; but only what he can conveniently pay for. In old times a past due bill was, and will always be, a detestable object, and goods not paid for are not sold, but thanklessly given away.

I believe that rich dress, decisive tones, and confident airs are frequently assumed for sinister purposes; and I will always regard those who make it a practice of talking about religion and duty on all occasions, in an affected and forced manner, with a degree of suspicion.

A sudden, bold, and unexpected question is a point of cunning with some men to entrap an unwary answer; while others seek to draw the attention from the main point of the negotiation by amusing tales and entertaining stories. The salesman will study these different kinds of men and will prepare for them, if he hopes to reach the top of his business line.

These things, in brief, are well for the salesman of to-day to consider and to remember that the old-time salesman has already used them as the basis of a successful creed.

Discounts have always confused the new salesman,

and the old-time traveller had as much trouble in managing discounts on a fair basis to all his customers as do those of to-day. By far the better plan is to follow the instructions of the house exactly—after they are once fixed in the mind. It is necessary to explain them to some customers, so that there will be no possibility of misunderstanding. There are some retail dealers who do not understand the essential difference between addition and subtraction in their effect on discounts. Thus it is well to explain that if Smith buys \$100.00 worth of goods at sixty per cent. discount and Jones buys them at fifty and ten, that Jones will pay five dollars more than Smith.

There is a story told of a merchant who ruined himself by his own miscalculation of discounts. The article manufactured he at first supplied to retail dealers at the large profit of 30 per cent. He afterwards confined his trade almost exclusively to large wholesale houses, to whom he charged the same price, but under a deduction of 20 per cent., believing that he was still realizing 10 per cent. for his own profit. His trade was very extensive, and it was not until after some years that he discovered the fact that, in place of making 10 per cent., as he imagined, by this mode of making sales, he was only realizing 4 per cent.! To \$100 worth of goods he added 30 per cent. and invoiced them at \$130. At the end of each month,

in the settlement of accounts, amounting to many thousands of dollars, with individual houses, he deducted 20 per cent, or \$26 on each \$130, leaving \$104 net for every \$100 value of goods at prime cost, in place of \$110, as he all along expected. Of course, this kind of arithmetic is not commonly practiced, and there is less danger of it occurring nowadays than in old times, when the wholesale dealer was accustomed to fix his own schedule of prices without the assistance of skilled accountants.

Another point of importance for the traveller to understand, which will help him towards success and the success of his house, is the length of credit that is to be given. It will astonish any one who has never examined the subject, how small profits on short credits will accumulate, in comparison with large profits on long credits. This is a subject that needs no argument, as every one can satisfy himself as to his own interest by his own calculations.

Upon the travelling salesman falls part of the responsibility, even to-day, of the means and standing of those who desire credit. In the old days it was expected that the salesman or drummer would investigate personally as to the responsibility of his customer in new territory. This has never been an easy task and many men have given it up in disgust. Some, having no faith in human testimony, will sell to no one on

credit whom they have not known from long personal acquaintance.

In these present times the use of Bradstreet, Dun and the various reporting agencies have taken much of the trying duty of investigating new customers from among the cares of the traveller. In old times the sources of information were more cumbersome and not so reliable. One source was from houses with whom the new customers formerly dealt. This information sometimes proved defective, as it was the case occasionally that the old houses recommended a bad customer to credit in order that he might obtain from others the means to pay them the old bills. Other sources of information were from parties in the same trade and from customers in the same place. There were also, before the Civil War, several Mercantile Agencies whose object it was to collect reliable information in relation to the home standing and character of men engaged in business throughout the country, and who embodied the facts in records for the convenience of those who chose to pay for access to it. The reports of these agencies were not infallible, as many unpaid accounts contracted on the strength of their information have often demonstrated.

These mercantile agencies—particularly Dun and Bradstreet—have since grown to possess immense influence. A New York merchant once declared himself

opposed to them and warned the American commercial world against aiding them to construct a power which he declared could destroy any man or combination of men it chose for destruction. I remember the warning words which he uttered when the agencies were but in their infancy: "All who believe in the golden rule should watch these reporting agencies with jealous scrutiny. Their system is fraught with danger. They are now harmless and comparatively accurate; but should they grow in power, and be generally relied upon, the credit of the mercantile community, which credit is its life and soul, would be in the hands of a few men, self-constituted despots and umpires, and their unknown and irresponsible agents, subject to the errors of ignorance and mistakes of carelessness, with no guaranteed exemption from the influence of private malice, favoritism, bribery or corruption." In spite of the fact that I have heard several times sentiments such as these expressed by thoughtful merchants, these same mercantile agencies are to-day the main dependence of the manufacturer, the wholesaler and the travelling salesman.

After all, the main source of information is to see the man and hear his statements. This, like other means of information, will sometimes fail; but generally the appearance and manners of a man will show his character. A man who is not worth a dollar is

sometimes more worthy of credit than another who has the nominal possession of thousands. "If you have a doubt whether a customer be tricky or honest, speculative or prudent," said an old-time banker, "be guided by the first impression—that is, the impression produced by the first interview. In nine cases out of ten the first impression will be found to be correct. It is not necessary to study physiognomy or phrenology to be able to judge of the character of men with whom we converse on matters of business."

It has always been a good plan to expect that strangers desiring credit should be introduced by some person to whom they are personally known, and the character of the introducer for prudence and good management should not be overlooked in judging of his friend. Where the reference is good and the impression is favorable, if the salesman or merchant desires to do business, he might as well go ahead and take some risk. In this connection the old aphorism is pertinent: "If a man cheats you *once* it is *his* fault; but if he cheats you *twice* it is *your* fault."

Adventurers, though, will always find a way to prosper at the expense of honest men. They do it today in the same way as of old. An individual, possessed of a moderate amount of capital, opens a hardware store in some thriving town. He gets in touch with some wholesale house, or with several of them,

and with one or two commendatory letters, but particularly with his offer of paying cash, he soon becomes acquainted with the firms. His acquaintance is at first limited; but he manages his cash with a little tact and the acquaintance very soon extends. At first he purchases cautiously and meets his obligations promptly, always managing to have his goods carefully packed and marked scientifically, and lets them stay on the street or at the station several days before he removes them. This game used to often succeed. He soon became known as a man of promptness and capital, and doing a dashing business; and such a business he does do, for at home he sells low for cash and never minds the small profits. His acquaintance is courted, and in old times he was be-drammed, be-dinnered and be-suppered. Everything goes on swimmingly, and finally he buys largely, stretches his purchasing power to the very limit, makes one grand manœuvre—a most impressive imitation of a Napoleon of commerce—and then judiciously and profitably explodes. This was the way the adventurer used to stir up things, and this is the way he will find always the easiest to feather his own nest.

It has always been considered very useful for any kind of a salesman to understand those principles of the law which apply to sales and contracts. It is a good thing for any man who is travelling to know

these laws, as the knowledge may prevent him from making a costly mistake. He may think that it is more the business of the home firm to give him what information he may need about unusual cases, but in the days before the war the traveller had to have this knowledge in his own head ready for use.

This knowledge was necessary in order to escape litigation, especially when dealing with litigious scoundrels, of whom, unfortunately, there is always a sufficient supply to fill the demand. Experience has convinced me that it would be good economical policy for every traveller to learn something certain about the operation of the laws regarding buying and selling.

Most of these laws are based upon the common sense working out of the law of contracts. The contract of sale was at one time a common paper in all business, but the formal order has now to a great extent rendered it obsolete. It is well, however, to know just what a contract of sale is.

It may be in writing or not, and there are two kinds, express or implied. The essential legal requisites of a complete and valid contract, as laid down by the jurists are: a person able to contract, a thing to be contracted for, a good and sufficient consideration, clear and explicit words to express the contract or agreement—and the consent of both the parties contracting. Equity or common sense will sometimes in-

terpose when some of these requisites are wanting, but they should be known to every buyer and seller. Minors, married women, idiots, and lunatics are not as a general rule able to contract. A person who signs an obligation while in a state of gross intoxication may annul it. A sale by a person who has no right to sell is not valid against the claim of the rightful owner, and a sale of stolen goods is in no case valid. The rightful owner may take them wherever he finds them, even when the party holding them has paid the full value for them; but, in the exercise of this right, he must avoid committing a breach of the peace. The thing sold must have an actual or potential existence, and be capable of delivery, otherwise it is not a contract of sale, but a special or executory agreement. If Smith sells Jones a horse, or a house, and it turns out that the horse was dead at the time, or the house burned down, though the fact was unknown to both parties, the contract of sale is void.

Consideration is necessary to the validity of all contracts not under seal, and the only exception are bills of exchange and negotiable notes, after they have been exchanged and have passed into the hands of an innocent indorsee in the usual course of trade before maturity. The immediate parties to a bill or note, and the indorsee of a bill overdue, equally with parties to other contracts, are affected by want of consideration.

A valuable consideration is one that is either beneficial to the party promising, or to a stranger, or some trouble or prejudice to the party to whom the promise is made.

Mutual consent is a requisite. Where the negotiation is conducted by letter, the contract is complete when the answer containing the acceptance is despatched by mail or otherwise, provided it be done with due diligence after the proposal, and before any intimation is received that the offer is withdrawn. On the other hand, if Smith makes an offer to Jones, and gives him a specified time for an answer, Smith may retract at any time before the offer is accepted, because the consent of both parties is necessary to make it a contract.

The moment that both parties have assented to the terms, the moment that one has said: "I will pay you your price," and the other has said: "All right, I accept it," the right of property rests in the buyer, and the risk of accident is with him, although he does not acquire the right of possession until he pays or tenders the price, unless by the contract or order slip it is otherwise provided.

When the goods are sold on credit without agreement of price, the buyer has a right to possession without tender of price, unless he becomes insolvent before he has them actually in his possession. On intimation

of this fact the seller has a right to retain them, or stop them in transit.

It is a general rule that each party is bound to communicate to the other a knowledge of material facts, provided he knows the other to be ignorant of them.

These are a few of the legal principles which govern contracts of sale, and it is worth the trouble of any salesman to find in them an application to his daily duties.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DESIRE TO MAKE MONEY.



HE intense desire to get rich regardless of the cost in character is a weakness in human nature especially noticeable among young men of spirit. Only a lifetime of experience teaches some of them that money is not capable of buying the best things of life.

There is no possible way of doing without money. Money is generally regarded as a proof of capacity, and the man who possesses it is thought to have more brains than the poorer people. Sometimes this is true. But more often the rich and successful man has worked harder and saved more wisely than the unsuccessful ones. The right idea about money is to earn it fairly and save it thriftily.

To regard it as the chief end of all existence is to rob a business career of most of its zest. To prove the truth of this it is only necessary to observe common life as it is open to our view all around us.

The intense rush to get rich that characterizes the American people resolves itself into the question on every proposition: "How much is there in this for me?" If a man follows this false axiom to its logical

finish it is impossible to imagine how deep into infamy he may sink. This question of "How much is there in this for me?" is legitimate as far as it concerns those precautions which each ought to take to assure his substance by his labor, but becomes pernicious as soon as it passes it and dominates the whole life. This is so true that it vitiates even the toil which earns our daily bread. We sell our labor in the highest market, but if to inspire us in this labor we have only the desire to get the pay, nothing can be worse for our minds.

A man whose only motive for doing his work is his wages, does a bad day's work; what interests him is not the doing, it is the money. If he can cheat in his labor without lessening his wages, he is certain to do it. He who does not love his work puts into it neither intellect or dignity. This kind of a man makes a bad workman and employers get rid of him as soon as they find out how he looks at things. It is not wise to confide your life to a doctor who is thinking entirely about his fee, for the motive of his action is the desire to replenish his purse from the contents of yours. This kind of a doctor is not using all his brains to cure you. It is for his interest that you should suffer longer.

The school-teacher who cares for his work only so far as it brings him profit, is an inefficient teacher;

for his pay is small and his teaching is bound to be indifferent. What value is the mercenary journalist? The day he writes for a dollar his work is not worth a dollar. The more elevated in kind is the object of our labor; the more mercenary spirit, if it is present, makes our labor void and corrupts it. There are a thousand reasons to say that all work merits its wage, that every man who devotes his energies to providing for his life should have his place in the sunlight of opportunity. He who does nothing useful, does not gain his livelihood, is only a parasite.

But there is no greater error than to make gain the sole motive of action. The best we put into our work—be that work done by strength of muscle, warmth of heart, or concentration of mind, is that for which no one can pay us. Nothing better proves that man is not a machine than this fact—two men at work with the same forces and the same movements produce totally different results. Where is the cause anomaly? The difference is in the divergence of their intentions. One has the mercenary spirit, the other has the higher ideals and the nobler purpose. Both receive their pay, but the labor of the one is barren; the other has put his soul into his work. The work of the one is useless to his employer. The other's work is a seed which germinates into more useful work.

This is the secret which explains why so many peo-

ple fail by following the same rules by which others succeed. Automatoms do not reproduce their work, for mercenary people give labor which yields no fruit. Of course, we must all bow before the facts of life, and we must of course recognize the difficulties of living. From day to day it becomes more imperative to combine well one's forces in order to succeed in feeding, clothing, housing, and bringing up a family. He who does not reckon rightly of these trying necessities, who makes bad calculations, and bad provisions for the future, is surely convicting himself of incompetence. This kind of a man runs the risk of sooner or later depending upon his friends for support.

It may cost something to speak the truth, that is, it may cost something in money. But if you remember that there are things that money can't buy—and that one of these things is your character—then you will be glad to pay the cost. If you get the money-hunger so violently that you are willing to sell your character for it, the time is bound to come when you will willingly give all your money to get back your character. It is impossible to have both, and every young man must make a choice.

You will always find people who want to get big salaries. More rarely you find men capable of earning them. When you are looking for honesty the difficulty increases. Mercenaries may be had every-

where, but faithful capacity is entirely another matter. Yet there are many faithful and capable men—there must be, or our vast commercial system could not hold together. Many of these intelligent and incorruptible men are among the successful ones; but you will find them among the poorly-paid workers also, and even the low-salaried man who is truthful finds peculiar satisfaction in his uprightness which compensates him for his lack of money. It little matters where you find them, you may be sure that they are not sacrificing the best things in the world to their own interest. Yet in the highest sense they are faithful to themselves because they have something of that simplicity which makes them into strong men.

If all business was subservient to the intense ambition to get money, it would not be long before the very spirit of life would die out of it. There are other things in business besides money, and a man need not be long in business to find out that a good name will do him more good to hold his trade, to guard his credit, and put vim into his efforts, than will his balance at the bank. Money, when it becomes the idol of a man, is a seed which grows into great abuses. Unless there go with it much knowledge of men, integrity, and intelligence, it will do its possessor very little good. After a man has followed money all his life, and at the expense of the ordinary virtues, he

regrets that he had not formed a different rule of life.

It is the love of power which makes most men pursue money so assiduously. Certainly money is a power, but just as certainly it is not all-powerful. Nothing complicates our lives, demoralizes us, and perverts the normal course of both our social life and our commercial system like the uncontrolled development of money-appetites. When this hunger takes possession of great bodies of men, everybody is duped by everybody else and no one can longer put trust in persons and things. If we can not trust persons and things then the whole course of commerce is bound to be crippled, for if honesty is ever so scarce as to become strange, then the whole fabric of credit will crumble.

Everything should find its own rightful place in the mind. When money, which should be the servant of our wishes, becomes a tyrannical power, corrupting our morality and injuring the finest part of our manhood, when some exert themselves to obtain it at any price, offering for sale what is not merchandise, it is time to ask ourselves: "Is it worth while to give so much of manhood for so little money?"

It is a good thing for us to have some prejudices and strong opinions, even if we don't parade them before other people on all occasions. Among the

most worthy of these prejudices is the one against being anything else but straight, even if there is money in being crooked. It is easy to forget that honesty is the best policy; but if we forget it long enough we shall have neither honesty nor policy. If a young man will determine to say what he has to say in the straightest possible way, with courtesy, but firmness, he will not be sorry that he adopted truth for his policy, and when he comes to be a veteran, and looks back over his life, he will doubtless find that he has been as successful as many men who had greater capacities, but not as much principle.

CHAPTER XIV.

TEMPTATIONS OF THE SALESMAN ON THE ROAD.



HERE is no occupation which requires so much strength of character as that of selling on the road. Many a young man with a good heart and a good head succumbs to these temptations, and he eventually seeks some other occupation.

One of the most alluring temptations is the inclination to kill time. This temptation to loaf is often the result of the absence of a definite plan of work. If a man understands his line thoroughly and has a real enthusiasm for his work he will sooner or later find some plan of work which best suits him.

When a beginner, however, arrives in a strange town, it often happens that the very strangeness of the people and surroundings have a tendency to confuse him. It is then that he can put in practice a few simple rules which are applicable to all types of human nature and to all conditions of merchants.

The selection of a good hotel is important upon arriving in a town. Once located in central and respectable quarters, the strange young man will soon begin to feel at home. He will regain the feeling of

confidence which he felt when he first started out and begin to feel sure of doing some business before he leaves that town.

He should make up his mind to get out early, and if the proprietor of a store is not about, why get acquainted with the clerks or the porter, or whoever may be about. Getting next to the working force in any place of business while waiting for the buyer is not time lost. Much information can be obtained this way, and frequently valuable information that will aid in opening the way to do some business.

Do not allow stormy weather to prevent starting out at an early hour, because bad weather will not be apt to cause the merchant to not open his store that day, and if he expects to make a customer he should reflect that in stormy weather the storekeeper might have more leisure to talk business.

The observance of regular rules of work will be of great value to any young man, for working according to a rigid routine will prevent many wasted hours and keep the mind occupied strictly with business to the exclusion of unproductive time-killers. Probably it is part of our common human nature to occasionally feel a tendency to idleness. Many of us need sometimes a little prodding to bring out all the hidden energy there is in us. But if a man studies his own nature carefully and fixes rigidly in his mind some good

routine of work, he can generally overcome his desire for leisure during working hours. It is entirely a matter of strengthening the will power. The will power can not be strengthened unless it is continually exercised in the right direction, and when the tendency toward leisurely habits is once overcome it is easy to see that idleness is nothing else but a habit. The habit of following a working routine will lead to a thorough covering of the territory and prevent that inward dissatisfaction which takes away confidence in your own capacity. This habit of a routine also trains the mind to constant vigilance in watching opportunities and cultivates force and persistence.

The gambling propensity is given full scope by some few traveling men, although gambling is not now so general as formerly. It commonly arises from the inherent enthusiasm for a contest of judgment, although in many cases it comes from an intense desire to get money easily. When it is carried to excess it is certain to bring trouble. Even when indulged in on railroad trains, or in the evening for an hour or two, it is not a recreation to be commended to the young travelling man. It causes a waste of time, stimulates a love for excitement, and many a dollar is lost in gambling that causes many a sleepless night to the loser.

The only men who profit by gambling are those who

make a living from it. The outsider who bets on cards, horse-racing, billiards, base-ball games, etc., not only loses money, but is devoting his mind to affairs that do not help him in his business. Competition is too sharp for any man to scatter on games the force he should devote to selling goods. Often a young man will wager small sums on the outcome of a game; but little by little the infatuation grows stronger in his mind until he becomes unfitted to hold his job. The worst form of gambling is that of speculating, in fact, devoting any time or money to any form of stock-gambling is injurious both to the mind and to the reputation of whoever is caught by the charms of speculation. Many a business man so deludes himself that he believes that if his business will only bear the cost of putting up margins, that the stock market will, sooner or later, make him wealthy. Even the apparently harmless game of checkers is not without its possibilities of injuring a business man who becomes infatuated with it. Some country merchants will delay waiting upon a disgusted customer while he finishes out a game of checkers.

The social game of poker, which generally starts with small stakes just to make it interesting, has caused many a man to lose a good night's rest, and not only unfitted him for his business the next day, but the small stakes grew into such large ones that

he was crippled financially. Once in a long while you meet a man who declares that he has always gambled and that it never did him any harm; but it is seldom that you meet such a man and you find some difficulty in believing him.

There are temptations on the road to mix excessively in the fast society which generally flurries around the centre of the cities and towns. This fast society is not in business and few customers can be found in it. But it is alluring to the young man, and if he once gets in the habit of seeking it in the evenings his business is bound to suffer. He will form acquaintances which are harmful and encourage habits of extravagance. Very often he will stand at the bar longer than is good either for his health or his reputation. On Sundays it is good morals and good policy to go to church; but if you don't go to church it is better to pass the day in some quiet manner than in frivolous amusements.

Many travelling men will say in conversation that to be a good "mixer" it is necessary to participate in the dissipations of whatever society includes your customers. I believe in observing all the rules of courtesy and in mixing in a gentlemanly way with all people. It is an unnecessary weakness, however, to be guided by the habits of others in forming your own character.

With the exception of three trips, I have not done any Sunday travelling, and very rarely done business on Sundays. In my earlier days on the road I did not go to church very much, but in 1875 I changed this custom. In the last thirty-six years I have only missed attending church on sixteen Sundays, and my non-attendance then was only caused by attacks of rheumatism.

In the whole course of my fifty years on the road I have never had any serious accidents.

Although an Easterner by birth and early training, as the West was settled, I found that my efforts were more successful than most men in the great agricultural territory which I now cover. In 1880, therefore, I moved from New York City to Kansas City, Missouri, where I have my home, at 223 North Jackson avenue.

W. J. H. W.

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Five old men
hundreds of them - from Calif

